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The [illegible] of Oliver [illegible]

In [illegible]

"Where the looking-glass and the toad-eater sit in council, and settle the complexion of the day."

Letter 111. Citizen of the World.

From the drawing by Frederick Simpson Coburn.

(*Vol. IV. page 23*)

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The Works of Oliver Goldsmith

In Ten Volumes

The Turk's Head Edition

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The Works of
Oliver Goldsmith

Edited by
Peter Cunningham, F. S. A.

With a Biographical and Critical Introduction
by
Horatio Sheafe Krans, Ph.D.

With Eighty Photogravures from Original Designs
by
Frederick Simpson Coburn

In Ten Volumes

Volume Four

The Citizen of the World

G. P. Putnam's Sons
New York
The Knickerbocker Press

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The Knickerbocker Press, New York

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Site of the Goldsmith Parsonage at Pallasmore

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THE CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

OR

LETTERS FROM A CHINESE PHILOSOPHER RESIDING IN LONDON, TO HIS FRIENDS IN THE EAST

London:
Printed for J. Newbery, at the Bible and Sun,
in St. Paul's Church-yard.

MDCCLXII.[1]

[2 vols. 12°.]

Copies of this edition exist with a different title-page to each volume; viz.—

London:
Printed for the Author:
and
Sold by J. Newbery and W. Bristow, in St.
Paul's Church-yard; J. Leake and W. Frederick
at Bath; B. Collins at Salisbury; and A. M. Smart and Co.
at Reading.
MDCCLXXII.

In every other respect the editions are identically the same.

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These Letters (one hundred and twenty-three in number) were written for *The Public Ledger*, a London Newspaper so-called, started by John Newbery, a publisher, bookseller, and seller of medicines, living at the sign of "The Bible and Sun," afterwards known as No. 65, St. Paul's Churchyard. The first number of *The Public Ledger* appeared on the 12th of January, 1760; and the first letter of *The Citizen of the World* on the 24th of the same month.

Goldsmith's remuneration appears to have been at the rate of *a guinea* a Letter (Prior, i., 356).

The celebrated *Turkish Spy*, the once celebrated *Persian Tales* ("turned" by Ambrose Philips), De Foe's *Tour through England* (written as a foreigner), and Walpole's Letter, "from Xo Ho, a Chinese Philosopher at London, to his friend Lien Chi, at Peking," 1757, fol., had prepared the public for the ready reception of the *Chinese Letters*. They were at once popular; and between the period of their publication in the columns of a newspaper, and the year of Goldsmith's death, 1760–1774, went through three separate editions. The vagaries of Sir William Chambers, the architect (admirably ridiculed by Mason), added to their temporary popularity; but their present reputation rests entirely on their own excellences, independent of any other assistance.

I may add that Goldsmith remembered a quotation from Voltaire made by himself in *The Monthly Review* for August, 1757: "The success of the *Persian Letters* arose from the delicacy of their satire. That satire which, in the mouth of an Asiatic, is poignant, would lose all its force when coming from an European."

The text of this reprint has been derived from a collation with the three editions which Goldsmith saw through the press, the third and last appearing in 1774, with this imprint—"London: printed for T. Carnan and F. Newbery, junior, at Number 65 in St. Paul's Churchyard, 1774." 2 vols. 12°.

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THE EDITOR'S PREFACE

[By Oliver Goldsmith]

THE schoolmen had formerly a very exact way of computing the abilities of their saints or authors. Escobar,[1] for instance, was said to have learning as five, genius as four, and gravity as seven. Caramuel[2] was greater than he. His learning was as eight, his genius as six, and his gravity as thirteen. Were I to estimate the merits of our Chinese Philosopher by the same scale, I would not hesitate to state his genius still higher; but as to his learning and gravity, these, I think, might safely be marked as nine hundred and ninety-nine, within one degree of absolute frigidity.

Yet, upon his first appearance here, many were angry not to find him as ignorant as a Tripoline ambassador, or an envoy from Mujac. They were surprised to find a man born so far from

[1] A famous casuist, born 1588, of a noble family of Seville, died 1669. His polemical and other writings occupy 23 folio volumes.

[2] A Cistercian monk, born at Madrid in 1606; died 1682. He wrote many works of controversial theology, and a system of divinity, in 7 vols. folio.

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London, that school of prudence and wisdom, endued even with a moderate capacity. They expressed the same surprise at his knowledge, that the Chinese do at ours. "How comes it," said they, "that the Europeans, so remote from China, think with so much justice and precision? They have never read our books, they scarcely know even our letters, and yet they talk and reason just as we do."[1] The truth is, the Chinese and we are pretty much alike. Different degrees of refinement, and not of distance, mark the distinctions among mankind. Savages of the most opposite climates have all but one character of improvidence and rapacity; and tutored nations, however separate, make use of the very same methods to procure refined enjoyment.

The distinctions of polite nations are few; but such as are peculiar to the Chinese appear in every page of the following correspondence. The metaphors and allusions are all drawn from the East. Their formality our author carefully preserves. Many of their favourite tenets in morals are illustrated. The Chinese are always concise; so is he. Simple; so is he. The Chinese are grave and sententious; so is he. But in one particular the

[1] Le Comte, vol. i. p. 210.—GOLDSMITH. The author, a Jesuit of Bordeaux, was one of the six missionaries sent to China in 1685, by command of the King of France: he died in 1729. The work referred to by Goldsmith (*Nouveaux Mémoires sur la Chine*) gave great offence to the faculty of divinity at Paris, on account of the author's prejudices in favour of the Chinese, whom he placed on a level with the Jews; and, by a decree of the parliament of Paris, passed in 1762, it was ordered to be burnt.

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resemblance is peculiarly striking: the Chinese are often dull; and so is he. Nor has my assistance been wanting. We are told in an old romance of a certain knight-errant and his horse who contracted an intimate friendship. The horse most usually bore the knight; but, in cases of extraordinary dispatch, the knight returned the favour, and carried his horse. Thus in the intimacy between my author and me, he has usually given me a lift of his Eastern sublimity, and I have sometimes given him a return of my colloquial ease.

Yet it appears strange, in this season of panegyric, when scarcely an author passes unpraised either by his friends or himself, that such merit as our Philosopher's should be forgotten. While the epithets of ingenious, copious, elaborate, and refined, are lavished among the mob, like medals at a coronation, the lucky prizes fall on every side, but not one on him. I could on this occasion make myself melancholy, by considering the capriciousness of public taste, or the mutability of fortune; but during this fit of morality, lest my reader should sleep, I 'll take a nap myself, and when I awake tell him my dream.

I imagined the Thames was frozen over, and I stood by its side. Several booths were erected upon the ice, and I was told by one of the spectators, that Fashion Fair was going to begin. He added, that every author who would carry his works there, might probably find a very good reception. I was resolved, however, to observe

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the humours of the place in safety from the shore; sensible that ice was at best precarious, and having been always a little cowardly in my sleep.

Several of my acquaintance seemed much more hardy than I, and went over the ice with intrepidity. Some carried their works to the fair on sledges, some on carts, and those which were more voluminous, were conveyed in waggons. Their temerity astonished me. I knew their cargoes were heavy, and expected every moment they would have gone to the bottom. They all entered the fair, however, in safety, and each soon after returned to my great surprise, highly satisfied with his entertainment, and the bargains he had brought away.

The success of such numbers at last began to operate upon me. If these, cried I, meet with favour and safety, some luck may, perhaps, for once attend the unfortunate. I am resolved to make a new adventure. The furniture, frippery, and fireworks of China have long been fashionably bought up. I 'll try the fair with a small cargo of Chinese morality. If the Chinese have contributed to vitiate our taste, I 'll try how far they can help to improve our understanding. But as others have driven into the market in waggons, I 'll cautiously begin by venturing with a wheelbarrow. Thus resolved, I baled up my goods and fairly ventured; when, upon just entering the fair, I fancied the ice that had supported an hundred

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waggons before, cracked under me, and wheelbarrow and all went to the bottom.

Upon awaking from my reverie with the fright, I cannot help wishing that the pains taken in giving this correspondence an English dress, had been employed in contriving new political systems, or new plots for farces. I might then have taken my station in the world, either as a poet or a philosopher, and made one in those little societies where men club to raise each other's reputation. But at present I belong to no particular class. I resemble one of those animals, that has been forced from its forest to gratify human curiosity. My earliest wish was to escape unheeded through life; but I have been set up for half-pence, to fret and scamper at the end of my chain. Though none are injured by my rage, I am naturally too savage to court any friends by fawning, too obstinate to be taught new tricks, and too improvident to mind what may happen. I am appeased, though not contented. Too indolent for intrigue, and too timid to push for favour, I am—But what signifies what am I.

Ἐλπὶς καὶ σὺ τύχη μέγα χαίρετε· τὸν λιμέν' εὗρον.
Οὐδὲν ἐμοὶ χ' ὑμῖν· παίζετε τοὺς μετ' ἐμέ.

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LETTERS
OF
A CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

LETTER I

INTRODUCTION—A CHARACTER OF THE CHINESE PHILOSOPHER [1]

*To Mr. * * * *, Merchant in London*

AMSTERDAM.

SIR,

Yours of the 13th instant, covering two bills, one on Messrs. R. and D. value 478*l.* 10*s.*, and the other on Mr. * * * *, value 285*l.* duly came to hand; the former of which met with honour, but the other has been trifled with, and I am afraid will be returned protested.

The bearer of this is my friend, therefore let him be yours. He is a native of Honan in China, and one who did me signal services, when he was a mandarin, and I a factor at Canton. By fre-

[1] The "Contents" of the several Letters were not in Goldsmith's lifetime prefixed to the Letters themselves, but added at the end of each volume by way of index. I have retained the useful transfer to the heading of each letter made by former editors.

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quently conversing with the English there, he has learned the language, though entirely a stranger to their manners and customs. I am told he is a philosopher; I am sure he is an honest man: that to you will be his best recommendation, next to the consideration of his being the friend of, Sir,

Yours, etc.

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LETTER II

THE ARRIVAL OF THE CHINESE IN LONDON—HIS MOTIVES FOR THE JOURNEY—SOME DESCRIPTION OF THE STREETS AND HOUSES

*From Lien Chi Altangi to * * * *, Merchant in Amsterdam*

LONDON.

FRIEND OF MY HEART,

May the wings of peace rest upon thy dwelling, and the shield of conscience preserve thee from vice and misery! For all thy favours accept my gratitude and esteem, the only tributes a poor philosophic wanderer can return. Sure, fortune is resolved to make me unhappy, when she gives others a power of testifying their friendship by actions, and leaves me only words to express the sincerity of mine.

I am perfectly sensible of the delicacy with which you endeavour to lessen your own merit and my obligations. By calling your late instances of friendship only a return for former favours, you would induce me to impute to your justice what I owe to your generosity.

The services I did you at Canton, justice, humanity, and my office bade me perform; those you have

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done me since my arrival at Amsterdam, no laws obliged you to, no justice required; even half your favours would have been greater than my most sanguine expectations.

The sum of money, therefore, which you privately conveyed into my baggage, when I was leaving Holland, and which I was ignorant of till my arrival in London, I must beg leave to return. You have been bred a merchant, and I a scholar; you consequently love money better than I. You can find pleasure in superfluity; I am perfectly content with what is sufficient; take therefore what is yours, it may give you some pleasure, even though you have no occasion to use it; my happiness it cannot improve, for I have already all that I want.

My passage by sea from Rotterdam to England was more painful to me than all the journey I ever made on land. I have traversed the immeasurable wilds of Mogul Tartary; felt all the rigours of Siberian skies: I have had my repose a hundred times disturbed by invading savages, and have seen without shrinking, the desert sands rise like a troubled ocean all around me: against these calamities I was armed with resolution; but in my passage to England, though nothing occurred that gave the mariners any uneasiness, to one who was never at sea before, all was a subject of astonishment and terror. To find the land disappear, to see our ship mount the waves swift as an arrow from the Tartar bow, to hear the wind howling

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through the cordage, to feel a sickness which depresses even the spirits of the brave;—these were unexpected distresses, and consequently assaulted me unprepared to receive them!

You men of Europe think nothing of a voyage by sea. With us of China, a man who has been from sight of land is regarded upon his return with admiration. I have known some provinces where there is not even a name for the ocean. What a strange people therefore am I got amongst, who have founded an empire on this unstable element, who build cities upon billows that rise higher than the mountains of Tipartala, and make the deep more formidable than the wildest tempest!

Such accounts as these, I must confess, were my first motives for seeing England. These induced me to undertake a journey of seven hundred painful days, in order to examine its opulence, buildings, sciences, arts, and manufactures, on the spot. Judge then, my disappointment on entering London, to see no signs of that opulence so much talked of abroad: wherever I turn, I am presented with a gloomy solemnity in the houses, the streets, and the inhabitants; none of that beautiful gilding which makes a principal ornament in Chinese architecture.[1] The streets of Nankin are sometimes strewed with gold leaf; very different are

[1] "The beauty of the ornamental gateways in the middle of Chinese streets arises wholly from the painting and gilding, and not from the proportions, which are weak and flimsy."—Davis, *Chinese*, ii., 320.

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those of London: in the midst of their pavements a great lazy puddle moves muddily along; heavy-laden machines, with wheels of unwieldy thickness, crowd up every passage; so that a stranger, instead of finding time for observation, is often happy if he has time to escape from being crushed to pieces.

The houses borrow very few ornaments from architecture; their chief decoration seems to be a paltry piece of painting hung out of their doors or windows, at once a proof of their indigence and vanity: their vanity, in each having one of those pictures exposed to public view; and their indigence, in being unable to get them better painted. In this respect, the fancy of their painters is also deplorable. Could you believe it? I have seen five black lions and three blue boars in less than the circuit of half a mile; and yet you know that animals of these colours are nowhere to be found except in the wild imaginations of Europe.[1]

From these circumstances in their buildings, and from the dismal looks of the inhabitants, I am induced to conclude that the nation is actually poor; and that, like the Persians, they make a splendid figure everywhere but at home. The proverb of Xixofou is, that a man's riches may be

[1] "Our streets are filled with blue boars, black swans, and red lions; not to mention flying pigs, and hogs in armour. Strange! that one who has all the birds and beasts in nature to choose out of, should live at the sign of an *Ens Rationis*."—ADDISON. The house or door signs of London were taken down in 1766, and numbers and names substituted in their stead. The removal diminished considerably the picturesque character of the streets. See Letter lxxvii.

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seen in his eyes; if we judge of the English by this rule, there is not a poorer nation under the sun.

I have been here but two days, so will not be hasty in my decisions; such letters as I shall write to Fipsihi in Moscow, I beg you 'll endeavour to forward with all diligence; I shall send them open, in order that you may take copies or translations, as you are equally versed in the Dutch and Chinese languages. Dear friend, think of my absence with regret, as I sincerely regret yours; even while I write, I lament our separation. Farewell.

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LETTER III

THE DESCRIPTION OF LONDON CONTINUED—THE LUXURY OF THE ENGLISH—ITS BENEFITS—THE FINE GENTLEMAN—THE FINE LADY

From Lien Chi Altangi, to the care of Fipsihi, resident in Moscow; to be forwarded by the Russian caravan to Fum Hoam, first president of the Ceremonial Academy at Pekin in China.

THINK not, O thou guide of my youth, that absence can impair my respect, or interposing trackless deserts blot your reverend figure from my memory. The farther I travel I feel the pain of separation with stronger force; those ties that bind me to my native country and you, are still unbroken. By every remove, I only drag a greater length of chain.[1]

Could I find ought worth transmitting from so remote a region as this to which I have wandered, I should gladly send it; but, instead of this, you must be contented with a renewal of my former professions, and an imperfect account of a people with whom I am as yet but superficially acquainted. The remarks of a man who has been but three days in the country can only be those

[1] "And drags at each remove a lengthening chain."
The Traveller, 1765.

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obvious circumstances which force themselves upon the imagination. I consider myself here as a newly created being introduced into a new world; every object strikes with wonder and surprise. The imagination, still unsated, seems the only active principle of the mind. The most trifling occurrences give pleasure till the gloss of novelty is worn away. When I have ceased to wonder, I may possibly grow wise;[1] I may then call the reasoning principle to my aid, and compare those objects with each other, which were before examined without reflection.

Behold me then in London, gazing at the strangers, and they at me; it seems they find somewhat absurd in my figure; and had I been never from home, it is possible I might find an infinite fund of ridicule in theirs; but by long travelling I am taught to laugh at folly alone, and to find nothing truly ridiculous but villainy and vice.

When I had just quitted my native country, and crossed the Chinese wall, I fancied every deviation from the customs and manners of China was a departing from nature: I smiled at the blue lips and red foreheads of the Tonguese; and could hardly contain when I saw the Daures dress their heads with horns. The Ostiacs powdered with red earth; and the Calmuck beauties, tricked out in all the finery of sheep-skin, appeared highly ridiculous; but I soon perceived that the ridicule

[1] "But wondering is not the way to grow wise."
Enquiry into Polite Learning.

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lay not in them, but in me; that I falsely condemned others of absurdity, because they happened to differ from a standard originally founded in prejudice or partiality.

I find no pleasure, therefore, in taxing the English with departing from nature in their external appearance, which is all I yet know of their character: it is possible they only endeavour to improve her simple plan, since every extravagance in dress proceeds from a desire of becoming more beautiful than nature made us; and this is so harmless a vanity, that I not only pardon but approve it. A desire to be more excellent than others is what actually makes us so, and as thousands find a livelihood in society by such appetites, none but the ignorant inveigh against them.

You are not insensible, most reverend Fum Hoam, what numberless trades, even among the Chinese, subsist by the harmless pride of each other. Your nose-borers, feet-swathers, tooth-stainers, eye-brow pluckers, would all want bread, should their neighbours want vanity. These vanities, however, employ much fewer hands in China than in England; and a fine gentleman, or a fine lady, here dressed up to the fashion, seems scarcely to have a single limb that does not suffer some distortions from art.

To make a fine gentleman, several trades are required, but chiefly a barber. You have undoubtedly heard of the Jewish champion, whose strength lay in his hair; one would think that the

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English were for placing all wisdom there: to appear wise, nothing more is requisite here than for a man to borrow hair from the heads of all his neighbours, and clap it like a bush on his own: the distributors of law and physic stick on such quantities, that it is almost impossible, even in idea, to distinguish between the head and the hair.

Those whom I have now been describing affect the gravity of the lion; those I am going to describe, more resemble the pert vivacity of smaller animals. The barber, who is still master of the ceremonies cuts their hair close to the crown; and then with a composition of meal and hog's lard plasters the whole in such a manner, as to make it impossible to distinguish whether the patient wears a cap or a plaster; but, to make the picture more perfectly striking, conceive the tail of some beast, a greyhound's tail, or a pig's tail for instance, appended to the back of the head, and reaching down to that place where tails in other animals are generally seen to begin; thus betailed and bepowdered, the man of taste fancies he improves in beauty, dresses up his hard-featured face in smiles, and attempts to look hideously tender. Thus equipped, he is qualified to make love, and hopes for success, more from the powder, on the outside of his head, than the sentiments within.

Yet when I consider what sort of a creature the fine lady is to whom he is supposed to pay his addresses, it is not strange to find him thus equipped in order to please. She is herself every whit as

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fond of powder and tails, and hog's lard, as he. To speak my secret sentiments, most reverend Fum, the ladies here are horridly ugly; I can hardly endure the sight of them; they no way resemble the beauties of China: the Europeans have quite a different idea of beauty from us. When I reflect on the small-footed perfections of an Eastern beauty, how is it possible I should have eyes for a woman whose feet are ten inches long? I shall never forget the beauties of my native city of Nangfew. How very broad their faces! how very short their noses! how very little their eyes! how very thin their lips! how very black their teeth! the snow on the tops of Bao is not fairer than their cheeks: and their eyebrows as small as the line by the pencil of Quamsi. Here a lady with such perfections would be frightful; Dutch and Chinese beauties indeed have some resemblance, but English women are entirely different; red cheeks, big eyes, and teeth of a most odious whiteness, are not only seen here, but wished for; and then they have such masculine feet, as actually serve *some* for walking!

Yet uncivil as nature has been, they seem resolved to outdo her in unkindness; they use white powder, blue powder, and black powder for their hair, and a red powder for the face on some particular occasions.

They like to have the face of various colours, as among the Tartars of Koreki, frequently sticking on, with spittle, little black patches on every part

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of it, except on the tip of the nose, which I have never seen with a patch. You 'll have a better idea of their manner of placing these spots, when I have finished a map of an English face patch'd up to the fashion, which shall shortly be sent to increase your curious collection of paintings, medals, and monsters.

But what surprises more than all the rest is what I have just now been credibly informed by one of this country. "Most ladies here," says he, "have two faces; one face to sleep in, and another to show in company: the first is generally reserved for the husband and family at home; the other put on to please strangers abroad: the family face is often indifferent enough, but the out-door one looks something better; this is always made at the toilet, where the looking-glass and toad-eater sit in council, and settle the complexion of the day."

I can't ascertain the truth of this remark; however, it is actually certain that they wear more clothes within doors than without; and I have seen a lady, who seemed to shudder at a breeze in her own apartment, appear half naked in the streets. Farewell.

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LETTER IV

ENGLISH PRIDE—LIBERTY—AN INSTANCE OF BOTH —NEWSPAPERS—POLITENESS

To the Same

THE English seem as silent as the Japanese, yet vainer than the inhabitants of Siam. Upon my arrival I attributed that reserve to modesty, which I now find has its origin in pride. Condescend to address them first, and you are sure of their acquaintance; stoop to flattery, and you conciliate their friendship and esteem. They bear hunger, cold, fatigue, and all the miseries of life without shrinking; danger only calls forth their fortitude; they even exult in calamity; but contempt is what they cannot bear. An Englishman fears contempt more than death; he often flies to death as a refuge from its pressure; and dies when he fancies the world has ceased to esteem him.

Pride seems the source not only of their national vices, but of their national virtues also. An Englishman is taught to love his king as his friend, but to acknowledge no other master than the laws which himself has contributed to enact. He

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despises those nations, who, that one may be free, are all content to be slaves; who first lift a tyrant into terror, and then shrink under his power as if delegated from heaven. Liberty is echoed in all their assemblies; and thousands might be found ready to offer up their lives for the sound, though perhaps not one of all the number understands its meaning. The lowest mechanic, however, looks upon it as his duty to be a watchful guardian of his country's freedom, and often uses a language that might seem haughty, even in the mouth of the great emperor who traces his ancestry to the moon.

A few days ago, passing by one of their prisons, I could not avoid stopping, in order to listen to a dialogue, which I thought might afford me some entertainment. The conversation was carried on between a debtor through the grate of his prison, a porter, who had stopped to rest his burthen, and a soldier at the window. The subject was upon a threatened invasion from France, and each seemed extremely anxious to rescue his country from the impending danger. "For my part," cries the prisoner, "the greatest of my apprehensions is for our freedom; if the French should conquer, what would become of English liberty? My dear friends, liberty is the Englishman's prerogative; we must preserve that at the expense of our lives; of that the French shall never deprive us; it is not to be expected that men who are slaves themselves would preserve our

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freedom should they happen to conquer." "Ay, slaves," cries the porter, "they are all slaves, fit only to carry burthens, every one of them. Before I would stoop to slavery, may this be my poison [and he held the goblet in his hand,] may this be my poison[1]—but I would sooner list for a soldier."

The soldier, taking the goblet from his friend, with much awe fervently cried out, "It is not so much our liberties as our religion that would suffer by such a change; ay, our religion, my lads. May the Devil sink me into flames [such was the solemnity of his adjuration], if the French should come over, but our religion would be utterly undone." So saying, instead of a libation, he applied the goblet to his lips, and confirmed his sentiments with a ceremony of the most persevering devotion.

In short, every man here pretends to be a politician: even the fair sex are sometimes found to mix the severity of national altercation with the blandishments of love, and often become conquerors by more weapons of destruction than their eyes.

This universal passion for politics is gratified by Daily Gazettes, as with us at China.[2] But

[1] A phrase used in the *Adventures of a Strolling Player* (Vol. VII., Essay XXI.), in *The Haunch of Venison* (Vol. I., p. 81), and in *Public Rejoicings for Victory* (Vol. VII., Unacknowledged Essay I.).

"And, madam," quoth he, "may this bit be my poison,
A prettier dinner I never set eyes on."

[2] When Lord Macartney visited China gazettes were published

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as in ours the emperor endeavours to instruct his people, in theirs the people endeavour to instruct the administration. You must not, however, imagine, that they who compile these papers have any actual knowledge of the politics, or the government of a state: they only collect their materials from the oracle of some coffee-house; which oracle has himself gathered them the night before from a beau at a gaming-table, who has pillaged his knowledge from a great man's porter, who has had his information from the great man's gentleman, who has invented the whole story for his own amusement the night preceding.

The English, in general, seem fonder of gaining the esteem than the love of those they converse with. This gives a formality to their amusements; their gayest conversations have something too wise for innocent relaxation: though in company you are seldom disgusted with the absurdity of a fool, you are seldom lifted into rapture by those strokes of vivacity which give instant, though not permanent pleasure.

What they want, however, in gaiety, they make up in politeness. You smile at hearing me praise the English for their politeness; you who have heard very different accounts from the mission-

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at Pekin, under the authority of government. The various appointments throughout the empire, the remission of taxes to districts suffering by dearth, the sovereign's rewards for extraordinary services, remarkable instances of longevity, and even cases of *crim. con.* were regularly recorded. See MACARTNEY'S *Embassy*, ii., 296.

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aries at Pekin, who have seen such a different behaviour in their merchants and seamen at home. But I must still repeat it, the English seem more polite than any of their neighbours; their great art in this respect lies in endeavouring, while they oblige, to lessen the force of the favour. Other countries are fond of obliging a stranger; but seem desirous that he should be sensible of the obligation. The English confer their kindness with an appearance of indifference, and give away benefits with an air as if they despised them.

Walking a few days ago between an English and a Frenchman into the suburbs of the city, we were overtaken by a heavy shower of rain. I was unprepared; but they had each large coats, which defended them from what seemed to me a perfect inundation. The Englishman seeing me shrink from the weather, accosted me thus: "Psha, man, what dost shrink at? here, take this coat; I don't want it; I find it no way useful to me; I had as lief be without it." The Frenchman began to show his politeness in turn. "My dear friend," cries he, "why won't you oblige me by making use of my coat? you see how well it defends me from the rain; I should not choose to part with it to others, but to such a friend as you I could even part with my skin to do him service."

From such minute instances as these, most reverend Fum Hoam, I am sensible your sa-

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gacity will collect instruction. The volume of nature is the book of knowledge; and he becomes most wise who makes the most judicious selection. Farewell.

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LETTER V

ENGLISH PASSION FOR POLITICS—A SPECIMEN OF A NEWSPAPER—CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MANNERS OF DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

To the Same

I HAVE already informed you of the singular passion of this nation for politics. An Englishman, not satisfied with finding, by his own prosperity, the contending powers of Europe properly balanced, desires also to know the precise value of every weight in either scale. To gratify this curiosity, a leaf of political instruction is served up every morning with tea: when our politician has feasted upon this, he repairs to a coffee-house, in order to ruminate upon what he has read, and increase his collection; from thence he proceeds to the ordinary, inquires what news, and treasuring up every acquisition there, hunts about all the evening in quest of more, and carefully adds it to the rest. Thus at night he retires home, full of the important advices of the day: when lo! awaking next morning, he finds the instructions of yesterday a collection of absurdity or palpable falsehood. This one would think a

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mortifying repulse in the pursuit of wisdom: yet our politician, no way discouraged, hunts on, in order to collect fresh materials, and in order to be again disappointed.

I have often admired the commercial spirit which prevails over Europe; have been surprised to see them carry on a traffic with productions, that an Asiatic stranger would deem entirely useless. It is a proverb in China, that an European suffers not even his spittle to be lost; the maxim, however, is not sufficiently strong, since they sell even their lies to great advantage. Every nation drives a considerable trade in this commodity with their neighbours.

An English dealer in this way, for instance, has only to ascend to his work-house, and manufacture a turbulent speech, averred to be spoken in the senate; or a report supposed to be dropt at court; a piece of scandal that strikes at a popular Mandarin; or a secret treaty between two neighbouring powers. When finished, these goods are baled up, and consigned to a factor abroad, who sends in return two battles, three sieges, and a shrewd letter filled with dashes———, blanks , and stars **** of great importance.

Thus you perceive, that a single gazette is the joint manufacture of Europe; and he who would peruse it with a philosophical eye might perceive in every paragraph something characteristic of the nation to which it belongs. A map does not exhibit a more distinct view of the boundaries

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and situation of every country, than its news does a picture of the genius and the morals of its inhabitants. The superstition and erroneous delicacy of Italy, the formality of Spain, the cruelty of Portugal, the fears of Austria, the confidence of Prussia, the levity of France, the avarice of Holland, the pride of England, the absurdity of Ireland, and the national partiality of Scotland, are all conspicuous in every page.

But, perhaps, you may find more satisfaction in a real newspaper, than in my description of one; I therefore send a specimen, which may serve to exhibit the manner of their being written, and distinguish the characters of the various nations which are united in its composition.

Naples.—"We have lately dug up here a curious Etruscan monument, broke in two in the raising. The characters are scarce visible; but Nugosi, the learned antiquary, supposes it to have been erected in honour of Picus, a Latin king, as one of the lines may be plainly distinguished to begin with a P. It is hoped this discovery will produce something valuable, as the literati of our twelve academies are deeply engaged in the disquisition."

Pisa.—"Since Father Fudgi,[1] prior of St. Gilbert's, has gone to reside at Rome, no miracles have been performed at the shrine of St. Gilbert: the devout begin to grow uneasy, and some begin

[1] Father Fudgi was doubtless the original of *Fudge*, the persevering exclamation of Burchell in *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

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actually to fear that St. Gilbert has forsaken them with the reverend father."

Lucca.—"The administrators of our serene republic have frequent conferences upon the part they shall take in the present commotions of Europe. Some are for sending a body of their troops, consisting of one company of foot and six horsemen, to make a diversion in favour of the empress-queen; others are as strenuous assertors of the Prussian interest; what turn these debates may take, time only can discover. However, certain it is, we shall be able to bring into the field, at the opening of the next campaign, seventy-five armed men, a commander-in-chief, and two drummers of great experience."

Spain.—"Yesterday, the new King showed himself to his subjects, and, after having stayed half an hour in his balcony, retired to the royal apartment. The night concluded on this extraordinary occasion with illuminations, and other demonstrations of joy. The Queen is more beautiful than the rising sun, and reckoned one of the first wits in Europe: she had a glorious opportunity of displaying the readiness of her invention, and her skill in repartee, lately at court. The Duke of Lerma, coming up to her with a low bow and a smile, and presenting a nosegay set with diamonds, 'Madam,' cries he, 'I am your most obedient humble servant.' 'Oh, Sir,' replies the Queen, without any prompter, or the least hesitation, 'I 'm very proud of the very great

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honour you do me.' Upon which she made a low courtesy, and all the courtiers fell a laughing at the readiness and the smartness of her reply."

Lisbon.—"Yesterday we had an *auto-da-fé*, at which were burned three young women accused of heresy, one of them of exquisite beauty, two Jews, and an old woman convicted of being a witch: one of the friars, who attended this last, reports, that he saw the devil fly out of her at the stake, in the shape of a flame of fire. The populace behaved on this occasion with great good-humour, joy, and sincere devotion.[1]

"Our merciful sovereign has been for some time past recovered of his fright: though so atrocious an attempt[2] deserved to exterminate half the nation, yet he has been graciously pleased to spare the lives of his subjects, and not above five hundred have been broke upon the wheel, or otherwise executed,[3] upon this horrid occasion."

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[1] "At the *auto-da-fé* at Lisbon, on the 20th of September (1761), the number of criminals amounted to fifty-four, including three in effigy. Father Malagrida was the only person burnt at the stake for writing heretical books, and pretending to the spirit of prophecy and revelations. This *auto* exceeded all before it in magnificence; the boxes were built round the square *da Rosico*, and all the regiments of horse and foot attended upon duty. The nobility, judges, and great officers of state were present, and a grand entertainment was given in the convent by the inquisitor Nuno de Mello."—*Gentleman's Mag.* for 1761, vol. xxxi., p. 478.

[2] A conspiracy against the life of the King of Portugal, attempted in September, 1758, as he was going at night through the streets of Lisbon. Many Jesuits, and several of the noble families of the dukes d'Aveiro and marquises of Tavora, were put to death for it.

[3] Some of the assassins were burnt alive, and their ashes thrown into the sea.

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Vienna.—"We have received certain advices that a party of twenty thousand Austrians, having attacked a much superior body of Prussians, put them all to flight, and took the rest prisoners of war."

Berlin.—"We have received certain advices that a party of twenty thousand Prussians, having attacked a much superior body of Austrians, put them to flight, and took a great number of prisoners, with their military chest, cannon, and baggage. Though we have not succeeded this campaign to our wishes; yet, when we think of him who commands us, we rest in security: while we sleep, our king is watchful for our safety."

Paris.—"We shall soon strike a signal blow. We have seventeen flat-bottomed boats at Havre. The people are in excellent spirits, and our ministers make no difficulty in raising the supplies.

"We are all undone; the people are discontented to the last degree; the ministers are obliged to have recourse to the most rigorous methods to raise the expenses of the war.

"Our distresses are great; but Madam Pompadour continues to supply our king, who is now growing old, with a fresh lady every night. His health, thank Heaven! is still pretty well; nor is he in the least unfit, as was reported, for any kind of royal exercitation. He was so frightened at the affair of Damiens,[1] that his physicians were appre-

[1] "Luke's iron crown and Damiens' bed of steel."—*The Traveller.*

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hensive lest his reason should suffer, but that wretch's tortures soon composed the kingly terrors of his breast."

England.—"Wanted an usher to an academy. N. B. He must be able to read, dress hair, and must have had the small-pox."

Dublin.—"We hear that there is a benevolent subscription on foot among the nobility and gentry of this kingdom, who are great patrons of merit, in order to assist Black and All Black in his contest with the Paddereen mare.[1] We hear from Germany that Prince Ferdinand has gained a complete victory, and taken twelve kettle-drums, five standards, and four waggons of ammunition, prisoners of war."

Edinburgh.—"We are positive when we say that Saunders M'Gregor, who was lately executed for horse stealing, is not a Scotchman, but born in Carrickfergus." Farewell.

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[1] A celebrated Irish racer. "There has been more money spent in the encouragement of the Padareen mare there [in Ireland] in one season, than given in rewards to learned men since the times of Usher."—*Goldsmith to Daniel Hodson*, Dec. 27, 1757.

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LETTER VI

HAPPINESS LOST BY SEEKING AFTER REFINEMENT THE CHINESE PHILOSOPHER'S DISGRACES

Fum Hoam, first president of the Ceremonial Academy at Pekin, to Lien Chi Altangi, the discontented wanderer: by the way of Moscow

WHETHER sporting on the flowery banks of the river Irtis or scaling the steepy mountains of Douchenour; whether traversing the black deserts of Kobi, or giving lessons of politeness to the savage inhabitants of Europe; in whatever country, whatever climate, and whatever circumstances, all hail! May Tien, the universal soul, take you under his protection, and inspire you with a superior portion of himself!

How long, my friend, shall an enthusiasm for knowledge continue to obstruct your happiness, and tear you from all the connections that make life pleasing? How long will you continue to rove from climate to climate, circled by thousands, and yet without a friend, feeling all the inconveniences of a crowd, and all the anxiety of being alone?

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I know you will reply, that the refined pleasure of growing every day wiser, is a sufficient recompense for every inconvenience. I know you will talk of the vulgar satisfaction of soliciting happiness from sensual enjoyment only; and probably enlarge upon the exquisite raptures of sentimental bliss. Yet, believe me, friend, you are deceived; all our pleasures, though seemingly never so remote from sense, derive their origin from some one of the senses. The most exquisite demonstration in mathematics, or the most pleasing disquisition in metaphysics, if it does not ultimately tend to increase some sensual satisfaction, is delightful only to fools, or to men who have by long habit contracted a false idea of pleasure; and he who separates sensual and sentimental enjoyments, seeking happiness from mind alone, is, in fact, as wretched as the naked inhabitant of the forest, who places all happiness in the first, regardless of the latter. There are two extremes in this respect; the savage, who swallows down the draught of pleasure without staying to reflect on his happiness; and the sage, who passeth the cup while he reflects on the conveniences of drinking.

It is with an heart full of sorrow, my dear Altangi, that I must inform you, that what the world calls happiness must now be yours no longer. Our great Emperor's displeasure at your leaving China, contrary to the rules of our government, and the immemorial custom of the empire, has produced the most terrible effects. Your wife, daughter,

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and the rest of your family, have been seized by his order, and appropriated to his use; all, except your son, are now the peculiar property of him who possesses all: him I have hidden from the officers employed for this purpose; and even at the hazard of my life I have concealed him. The youth seems obstinately bent on finding you out, wherever you are; he is determined to face every danger that opposes his pursuit. Though yet but fifteen, all his father's virtues and obstinacy sparkle in his eyes, and mark him as one destined to no mediocrity of fortune.

You see, my dearest friend, what imprudence has brought thee to; from opulence, a tender family, surrounding friends, and your master's esteem, it has reduced thee to want, persecution, and, still worse, to our mighty monarch's displeasure. Want of prudence is too frequently the want of virtue; nor is there on earth a more powerful advocate for vice than poverty. As I shall endeavour to guard thee from one, so guard thyself from the other; and still think of me with affection and esteem. Farewell.

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LETTER VII

THE TIE OF WISDOM ONLY TO MAKE US HAPPY—THE BENEFITS OF TRAVELLING UPON THE MORALS OF A PHILOSOPHER

From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first president of the Ceremonial Academy in China

The Editor thinks proper to acquaint the reader, that the greatest part of the following letter seems to him to be little more than a rhapsody of sentences borrowed from Confucius, the Chinese philosopher.

A WIFE, a daughter, carried into captivity to expiate my offence, a son scarce yet arrived at maturity, resolving to encounter every danger in the pious pursuit of one who has undone him,—these indeed are circumstances of distress; though my tears were more precious than the gem of Golconda, yet would they fall upon such an occasion.

But I submit to the stroke of Heaven: I hold the volume of Confucius in my hand, and as I read, grow humble, and patient, and wise. We should feel sorrow, says he, but not sink under its oppression. The heart of a wise man should resemble

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a mirror, which reflects every object without being sullied by any. The wheel of fortune turns incessantly round; and who can say within himself, I shall to-day be uppermost? We should hold the immutable mean that lies between insensibility and anguish; our attempts should be not to extinguish nature, but to repress it; not to stand unmoved at distress, but endeavour to turn every disaster to our own advantage. Our greatest glory is, not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.

I fancy myself at present, O thou reverend disciple of Taou,[1] more than a match for all that can happen. The chief business of my life has been to procure wisdom, and the chief object of that wisdom was to be happy. My attendance on your lectures, my conferences with the missionaries of Europe, and all my subsequent adventures upon quitting China, were calculated to increase the sphere of my happiness, not my curiosity. Let European travellers cross seas and deserts merely to measure the height of a mountain, to describe the cataract of a river, or tell the commodities which every country may produce: merchants or geographers, perhaps, may find a profit by such discoveries, but what advantage can accrue to a

[1] "Taou appeared nearly simultaneously with Confucius. As far as can be gathered of the real drift of his doctrines, he seems to have inculcated a contempt of riches and honours, and all worldly distinctions, and to have aimed, like Epicurus, at subduing every passion that could interfere with personal tranquillity and self-enjoyment."—Davis, vol. ii., p. 114.

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philosopher from such accounts, who is desirous of understanding the human heart, who seeks to know the *men* of every country, who desires to discover those differences which result from climate, religion, education, prejudice, and partiality.

I should think my time very ill-bestowed, were the only fruits of my adventures to consist in being able to tell, that a tradesman of London lives in an house three times as high as that of our great emperor. That the ladies wear longer clothes than the men, that the priests are dressed in colours which we are taught to detest, and that their soldiers wear scarlet, which is with us the symbol of peace and innocence. How many travellers are there, who confine their relations to such minute and useless particulars! For one who enters into the genius of those nations with whom he has conversed, who discloses their morals, their opinions, the ideas which they entertain of religious worship, the intrigues of their ministers, and their skill in sciences, there are twenty who only mention some idle particulars, which can be of no real use to a true philosopher. All their remarks tend neither to make themselves nor others more happy; they no way contribute to control their passions, to bear adversity, to inspire true virtue, or raise a detestation of vice.

Men may be very learned, and yet very miserable; it is easy to be a deep geometrician, or a sublime astronomer, but very difficult to be a good

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man. I esteem, therefore, the traveller who instructs the heart, but despise him who only indulges the imagination. A man who leaves home to mend himself and others, is a philosopher; but he who goes from country to country, guided by the blind impulse of curiosity, is only a vagabond. From Zerdusht [1] down to him Tyanæa,[2] I honour all those great names who endeavour to unite the world by their travels: such men grew wiser as well as better, the farther they departed from home, and seemed like rivers, whose streams are not only increased, but refined, as they travel from their source.

For my own part, my greatest glory is, that travelling has not more steeled my constitution against all the vicissitudes of climate, and all the depressions of fatigue, than it has my mind against the accidents of fortune, or the accesses of despair. Farewell.

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[1] Zoroaster.

[2] Apollonius of Tyanæa, the celebrated traveller, astrologer, etc., who numbered Vespasian among his dupes.

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LETTER VIII

THE CHINESE DECEIVED BY A PROSTITUTE IN THE STREETS OF LONDON

To the Same

HOW insupportable, O thou possessor of heavenly wisdom, would be this separation, this immeasurable distance from my friends, were I not able thus to delineate my heart upon paper, and to send thee daily a map of my mind!

I am every day better reconciled to the people among whom I reside, and begin to fancy that in time I shall find them more opulent, more charitable, and more hospitable than I at first imagined. I begin to learn somewhat of their manners and customs, and to see reasons for several deviations which they make from us, from whom all other nations derive their politeness as well as their original.

In spite of taste, in spite of prejudice, I now begin to think their women tolerable. I can now look on a languishing blue eye without disgust,

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and pardon a set of teeth, even though whiter than ivory. I now begin to fancy there is no universal standard for beauty. The truth is, the manners of the ladies in this city are so very open and so vastly engaging, that I am inclined to pass over the more glaring defects of their persons, since compensated by the more solid, yet latent, beauties of the mind. What though they want black teeth, or are deprived of the allurements of feet no bigger than their thumbs, yet still they have souls, my friend; such souls, so free, so pressing, so hospitable, and so engaging! I have received more invitations in the streets of London from the sex in one night than I have met with at Pekin in twelve revolutions of the moon.

Every evening, as I return home from my usual solitary excursions, I am met by several of those well-disposed daughters of hospitality, at different times, and in different streets, richly dressed, and with minds not less noble than their appearance. You know that nature has indulged me with a person by no means agreeable; yet are they too generous to object to my homely appearance; they feel no repugnance at my broad face and flat nose; they perceive me to be a stranger, and that alone is a sufficient recommendation. They even seem to think it their duty to do the honours of the country by every act of complaisance in their power. One takes me under the arm, and in a manner forces me along; another catches me round

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the neck, and desires to partake in this office of hospitality; while a third, kinder still, invites me to refresh my spirits with wine. Wine is in England reserved only for the rich; yet here even wine is given away to the stranger!

A few nights ago, one of these generous creatures dressed all in white, and flaunting like a meteor by my side, forcibly attended me home to my own apartment. She seemed charmed with the elegance of the furniture, and the convenience of my situation: and well indeed she might, for I have hired an apartment for not less than two shillings of their money every week. But her civility did not rest here; for at parting, being desirous to know the hour and perceiving my watch out of order, she kindly took it to be repaired by a relation of her own, which you may imagine will save some expense; and she assures me that it will cost her nothing. I shall have it back in a few days, when mended, and am preparing a proper speech, expressive of my gratitude on the occasion: "Celestial excellence," I intend to say, "happy I am in having found out, after many painful adventures, a land of innocence, and a people of humanity: I may rove into other climes, and converse with nations yet unknown, but where shall I meet a soul of such purity as that which resides in thy breast! Sure thou has been nurtured by the bill of the Shin Shin, or sucked the breasts of the provident Gin Hiung. The melody of thy voice could rob the Chong Fou of her whelps, or inveigle the Boh that

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lives in the midst of the waters. Thy servant shall ever retain a sense of thy favours, and one day boast of thy virtue, sincerity, and truth, among the daughters of China." Adieu.

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LETTER IX

THE LICENTIOUSNESS OF THE ENGLISH WITH REGARD TO WOMEN — A CHARACTER OF A WOMAN'S MAN

To the Same

I HAVE been deceived! She whom I fancied a daughter of paradise has proved to be one of the infamous disciples of Han! I have lost a trifle; I have gained the consolation of having discovered a deceiver. I once more, therefore, relax into my former indifference with regard to the English ladies; they once more begin to appear disagreeable in my eyes. Thus is my whole time passed in forming conclusions which the next minute's experience may probably destroy; the present moment becomes a comment on the past, and I improve rather in humility than wisdom.

Their laws and religion forbid the English to keep more than one woman; I therefore concluded that prostitutes were banished from society. I was deceived; every man here keeps as many wives as he can maintain: the laws are cemented with

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blood, praised, and disregarded. The very Chinese, whose religion allows him two wives, takes not half the liberties of the English in this particular. Their laws may be compared to the books of the Sybils; they are held in great veneration, but seldom read, or seldomer understood; even those who pretend to be their guardians dispute about the meaning of many of them, and confess their ignorance of others. The law, therefore, which commands them to have but one wife, is strictly observed only by those for whom one is more than sufficient, or by such as have not money to buy two. As for the rest, they violate it publicly, and some glory in its violation. They seem to think, like the Persians, that they give evident marks of manhood by increasing their seraglio. A mandarin, therefore, here generally keeps four wives, a gentleman three, and a stage-player two. As for the magistrates, the country justices, and squires, they are employed first in debauching young virgins, and then punishing the transgression.

From such a picture you will be apt to conclude that he who employs four ladies for his amusement has four times as much constitution to spare as he who is contented with one; that a mandarin is much cleverer than a gentleman, and a gentleman than a player; and yet it is quite the reverse: a mandarin is frequently supported on spindle shanks, appears emaciated by luxury, and is obliged to have recourse to variety, merely from

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the weakness, not the vigour of his constitution, the number of his wives being the most equivocal symptom of his virility.

Beside the country squire, there is also another set of men whose whole employment consists in corrupting beauty: these, the silly part of the fair sex call amiable; the more sensible part of them, however, give them the title of abominable. You will probably demand what are the talents of a man thus caressed by the majority of the opposite sex? what talents, or what beauty is he possessed of superior to the rest of his fellows? To answer you directly, he has neither talents nor beauty, but then he is possessed of impudence and assiduity. With assiduity and impudence, men of all ages and all figures may commence admirers. I have even been told of some who made professions of expiring for love, when all the world could perceive they were going to die of old age; and, what is more surprising still, such battered beaus are generally most infamously successful.

A fellow of this kind employs three hours every morning in dressing his head, by which is understood only his hair. He is a professed admirer, not of any particular lady, but of the whole sex. He is to suppose every lady has caught cold every night, which gives him an opportunity of calling to see how she does the next morning. He is upon all occasions to show himself in very great pain for the ladies: if a lady drops even a pin, he is to fly in order to present it. He never speaks to a lady

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"Upon proper occasions he looks excessively tender."

Letter IX. Citizen of the World.

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without advancing his mouth to her ear, by which he frequently addresses more senses than one. Upon proper occasions he looks excessively tender. This is performed by laying his hand upon his heart, shutting his eyes, and showing his teeth. He is excessively fond of dancing a minuet with the ladies, by which is only meant walking round the floor eight or ten times with his hat on, affecting great gravity, and sometimes looking tenderly on his partner. He never affronts any man himself, and never resents an affront from another. He has an infinite variety of small talk upon all occasions, and laughs when he has nothing more to say. Such is the killing creature who prostrates himself to the sex till he has undone them; all whose submissions are the effects of design, and who to please the ladies almost becomes himself a lady.

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LETTER X

THE JOURNEY OF THE CHINESE FROM PEKIN TO MOSCOW—THE CUSTOMS OF THE DAURES

To the Same

I HAVE hitherto given you no account of my journey from China to Europe, of my travels through countries where Nature sports in primeval rudeness, where she pours forth her wonders in solitude; countries from whence the rigorous climate, the sweeping inundation, the drifted desert, the howling forest, and mountains of immeasurable height banish the husbandman and spread extensive desolation; countries where the brown Tartar wanders for a precarious subsistence, with an heart that never felt pity, himself more hideous than the wilderness he makes.

You will easily conceive the fatigue of crossing vast tracts of land, either desolate, or still more dangerous by its inhabitants: the retreat of men who seem driven from society, in order to make war upon all the human race; nominally professing a subjection to Muscovy or China, but without any resemblance to the countries on which they depend.

After I had crossed the great wall, the first ob-

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jects that presented themselves were the remains of desolated cities, and all the magnificence of venerable ruin. There were to be seen temples of beautiful structure, statues wrought by the hand of a master, and around, a country of luxuriant plenty; but not one single inhabitant to reap the bounties of Nature. These were prospects that might humble the pride of kings, and repress human vanity. I asked my guide the cause of such desolation. These countries, says he, were once the dominions of a Tartar prince; and these ruins the seat of arts, elegance, and ease. This prince waged an unsuccessful war with one of the emperors of China; he was conquered, his cities plundered, and all his subjects carried into captivity. Such are the effects of the ambition of kings! "Ten dervises," says the Indian proverb, "shall sleep in peace upon a single carpet, while two kings shall quarrel, though they have kingdoms to divide them." Sure, my friend, the cruelty and the pride of man have made more deserts than Nature ever made! She is kind, but man is ungrateful.

Proceeding in my journey through this pensive scene of desolated beauty, in a few days I arrived among the Daures, a nation still dependent on China. Xaizigar is their principal city, which, compared with those of Europe, scarcely deserves the name. The governors, and other officers, who are sent yearly from Pekin, abuse their authority, and often take the wives and daughters of the inhabitants to themselves. The Daures, accustomed

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to base submission, feel no resentment at those injuries, or stifle what they feel. Custom and necessity teach even barbarians the same art of dissimulation that ambition and intrigue inspire in the breasts of the polite. Upon beholding such unlicensed stretches of power, alas! thought I, how little does our wise and good emperor know of these intolerable exactions! these provinces are too distant for complaint, and too insignificant to expect redress. The more distant the government, the honester should be the governor to whom it is entrusted; for hope of impunity is a strong inducement to violation.

The religion of the Daures is more absurd than even that of the sectaries of Fohi. How would you be surprised, O sage disciple and follower of Confucius, you who believe one eternal intelligent cause of all, should you be present at the barbarous ceremonies of this infatuated people! How would you deplore the blindness and folly of mankind! His boasted reason seems only to light him astray, and brutal instinct more regularly points out the path to happiness. Could you think it? they adore a wicked divinity; they fear him and they worship him; they imagine him a malicious being, ready to injure and ready to be appeased. The men and women assemble at midnight in a hut, which serves for a temple. A priest stretches himself on the ground, and all the people pour forth the most horrid cries, while drums and timbrels swell the infernal concert. After this dissonance, miscalled

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music, has continued about two hours, the priest rises from the ground, assumes an air of inspiration, grows big with the inspiring demon, and pretends to a skill in futurity.

In every country, my friend, the bonzes, the brachmans, and the priests deceive the people: all reformations begin from the laity; the priests point us out the way to heaven with their fingers, but stand still themselves, nor seem to travel towards the country in view.

The customs of this people correspond to their religion: they keep their dead for three days on the same bed where the person died; after which they bury him in a grave moderately deep, but with the head still uncovered. Here for several days they present him different sorts of meats; which when they perceive he does not consume they fill up the grave, and desist from desiring him to eat for the future. How, how can mankind be guilty of such strange absurdity? to entreat a dead body already putrid to partake of the banquet! Where, I again repeat it, is human reason? not only some men, but whole nations, seem divested of its illumination. Here we observe a whole country adoring a divinity through fear, and attempting to feed the dead. These are their most serious and most religious occupations; are these men rational, or are not the apes of Borneo more wise?

Certain I am, O thou instructor of my youth, that without philosophers, without some few virtuous men, who seem to be of a nature different

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from the rest of mankind, without such as these the worship of a wicked divinity would surely be established over every part of the earth. Fear guides more to their duty than gratitude: for one man who is virtuous from the love of virtue, from the obligation which he thinks he lies under to the Giver of All, there are ten thousand who are good only from their apprehensions of punishment. Could these last be persuaded, as the Epicureans were, that heaven had no thunders in store for the villain, they would no longer continue to acknowledge subordination, or thank that Being who gave them existence. Adieu.

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CHAPTER XI

THE BENEFITS OF LUXURY IN MAKING A PEOPLE MORE WISE AND HAPPY

To the Same

FROM such a picture of nature in primeval simplicity, tell me, my much respected friend, are you in love with fatigue and solitude? Do you sigh for the severe frugality of the wandering Tartar, or regret being born amidst the luxury and dissimulation of the polite? Rather tell me, has not every kind of life vices peculiarly its own? Is it not a truth that refined countries have more vices, but those not so terrible; barbarous nations few, and they of the most hideous complexion? Perfidy and fraud are the vices of civilised nations, credulity and violence those of the inhabitants of the desert. Does the luxury of the one produce half the evils of the inhumanity of the other? Certainly, those philosophers who disclaim against luxury have but little understood its benefits; they seem insensible that to luxury we owe not only the greatest part of our knowledge, but even of our virtues.

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It may sound fine in the mouth of a declaimer, when he talks of subduing our appetites, of teaching every sense to be content with a bare sufficiency, and of supplying only the wants of nature; but is there not more satisfaction in indulging those appetites, if with innocence and safety, than in restraining them? Am not I better pleased in enjoyment than in the sullen satisfaction of thinking that I can live without enjoyment? The more various our artificial necessities, the wider is our circle of pleasure; for all pleasure consists in obviating necessities as they rise: luxury, therefore, as it increases our wants, increases our capacity for happiness.

Examine the history of any country remarkable for opulence and wisdom, you will find they would never have been wise had they not been first luxurious; you will find poets, philosophers, and even patriots, marching in luxury's train. The reason is obvious: we then only are curious after knowledge, when we find it connected with sensual happiness. The senses ever point out the way, and reflection comments upon the discovery. Inform a native of the desert of Kobi of the exact measure of the parallax of the moon, he finds no satisfaction at all in the information; he wonders how any could take such pains, and lay out such treasure, in order to solve so useless a difficulty; but connect it with his happiness, by showing that it improves navigation, that by such an investigation he may have a warmer coat, a

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better gun, or a finer knife, and he is instantly in raptures at so great an improvement. In short, we only desire to know what we desire to possess; and, whatever we may talk against it, luxury adds the spur to curiosity, and gives us a desire of becoming more wise.

But not our knowledge only, but our virtues are improved by luxury. Observe the brown savage of Thibet, to whom the fruits of the spreading pomegranate supply food, and its branches an habitation. Such a character has few vices, I grant, but those he has are of the most hideous nature: rapine and cruelty are scarce crimes in his eye; neither pity nor tenderness, which ennoble every virtue, have any place in his heart; he hates his enemies, and kills those he subdues. On the other hand, the polite Chinese and civilised European seem even to love their enemies. I have just now seen an instance where the English have succoured those enemies whom their own countrymen actually refused to relieve.[1]

The greater the luxuries of every country, the more closely, politically speaking, is that country united. Luxury is the child of society alone; the luxurious man stands in need of a thousand different artists to furnish out his happiness; it is more likely, therefore, that he should be a good citizen who is connected by motives of self-interest with

[1] Alluding to a large public subscription then going on in England for the relief of distressed French prisoners of war. The subject occurs again in Letter xxiii.

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so many, than the abstemious man who is united to none.

In whatsoever light, therefore, we consider luxury, whether as employing a number of hands, naturally too feeble for more laborious employment; as finding a variety of occupation for others who might be totally idle, or as furnishing out new inlets to happiness, without encroaching on mutual property; in whatever light we regard it, we shall have reason to stand up in its defence, and the sentiment of Confucius still remains unshaken—"That we should enjoy as many of the luxuries of life as are consistent with our own safety, and the prosperity of others; and that he who finds out a new pleasure is one of the most useful members of society."[1]

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[1] "On Tuesday, April 13, 1775, Johnson, Goldsmith, and I dined at General Oglethorpe's. Goldsmith expatiated on the common topic that the race of our people was degenerated, and that this was owing to luxury. *Johnson:* 'Sir, in the first place, I doubt the fact. I believe there are as many tall men in England now as ever there were. But, secondly, supposing the stature of our people to be diminished, that is not owing to luxury; for, Sir, consider to how very small a proportion of our people luxury can reach. . . . Luxury, so far as it reaches the poor, will do good to the race of people; it will strengthen and multiply them. . . . Let us take a walk from Charing-cross to Whitechapel, through, I suppose, the greatest series of shops in the world: what is there in any of these shops (if you except gin-shops) that can do any human being any harm?' *Goldsmith:* 'Well, Sir, I 'll accept your challenge. The very next shop to Northumberland House is a pickle-shop.' *Johnson:* 'Well, Sir, do we not know that a maid can in one afternoon make pickles sufficient to serve a whole family for a year? nay, that five pickle-shops can serve all the kingdom? Besides, Sir, there is no harm done to anybody by the making of pickles, or the eating of pickles.'" —Boswell, *by* Croker, p. 251.

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LETTER XII

THE FUNERAL SOLEMNITIES OF THE ENGLISH—THEIR PASSION FOR FLATTERING EPITAPHS

To the Same

FROM the funeral solemnities of the Daures, who think themselves the politest people in the world, I must make a transition to the funeral solemnities of the English, who think themselves as polite as they. The numberless ceremonies which are used here when a person is sick, appear to me so many evident marks of fear and apprehension. Ask an Englishman, however, whether he is afraid of death, and he boldly answers in the negative; but observe his behaviour in circumstances of approaching sickness, and you will find his actions give his assertions the lie.

The Chinese are very sincere in this respect; they hate to die, and they confess their terrors;[1] a great part of their life is spent in preparing things

[1] The Chinese seldom mention death except by a circumlocution, as "to become immortal"; that is, in the modified sense of the Buddhists.—DAVIS's *Chinese*, vol. i., p. 299.

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proper for their funeral. A poor artisan shall spend half his income in providing himself a tomb twenty years before he wants it; and denies himself the necessaries of life, that he may be amply provided for when he shall want them no more.[1]

But people of distinction in England really deserve pity; for they die in circumstances of the most extreme distress. It is an established rule never to let a man know that he is dying: physicians are sent for, the clergy are called, and everything passes in silent solemnity round the sick-bed. The patient is in agonies, looks round for pity; yet not a single creature will say that he is dying. If he is possessed of fortune, his relations entreat him to make his will, as it may restore the tranquillity of his mind. He is desired to undergo the rites of the Church, for decency requires it. His friends take their leave only because they do not care to see him in pain. In short, an hundred stratagems are used to make him do what he might have been induced to perform only by being told, "Sir, you are past all hopes, and had as good think decently of dying."

Besides all this, the chamber is darkened, the whole house echoes to the cries of the wife, the lamentations of the children, the grief of the ser-

[1] Of all the subjects of their care, there are none which the Chinese so religiously attend to as the tombs of their ancestors, conceiving that any neglect is sure to be followed by worldly misfortune—Davis's *Chinese*, vol. i., p. 294.

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vants, and the sighs of friends. The bed is surrounded with priests and doctors in black, and only flambeaux emit a yellow gloom. Where is the man, how intrepid soever, that would not shrink at such a hideous solemnity? For fear of affrighting their expiring friends, the English practise all that can fill them with terror. Strange effect of human prejudice, thus to torture, merely from mistaken tenderness!

You see, my friend, what contradictions there are in the tempers of those islanders; when prompted by ambition, revenge, or disappointment, they meet death with the utmost resolution; the very man who in his bed would have trembled at the aspect of a doctor shall go with intrepidity to attack a bastion, or deliberately noose himself up in his garters.

The passion of the Europeans for magnificent interments is equally strong with that of the Chinese. When a tradesman dies, his frightful face is painted up by an undertaker, and placed in a proper situation to receive company: this is called lying in state. To this disagreeable spectacle all the idlers in town flock, and learn to loathe the wretch dead, whom they despised when living. In this manner you see some, who would have refused a shilling to save the life of their dearest friend, bestow thousands on adorning their putrid corpse. I have been told of a fellow who, grown rich by the price of blood, left it in his will that he should lie in state; and thus unknowingly gibbeted

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himself into infamy, when he might have otherwise quietly retired into oblivion.[1]

When the person is buried, the next care is to make his epitaph: they are generally reckoned best which flatter most; such relations, therefore, as have received most benefits from the defunct discharge this friendly office, and generally flatter in proportion to their joy. When we read those monumental histories of the dead, it may be justly said, that "all men are equal in the dust"; for they all appear equally remarkable for being the most sincere Christians, the most benevolent neighbours, and the honestest men of their time. To go through an European cemetery, one would be apt to wonder how mankind could have so basely degenerated from such excellent ancestors. Every tomb pretends to claim your reverence and regret; some are praised for piety in those inscriptions, who never entered the temple until they were dead; some are praised for being excellent poets who were never mentioned except for their dulness when living; others for sublime orators who were never noted except for their impudence; and others still for military achievements who were never in any other skirmishes but with the watch. Some even make epitaphs for themselves, and

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[1] "*Croaker.* Well, well, it 's a good child, so say no more; but come with me, and we shall see something that will give us a great deal of pleasure, I promise you; old Ruggins, the curry-comb maker, lying in state: I am told he makes a very handsome corpse, and becomes his coffin prodigiously."—*The Good-Natured Man*, Act 1.

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bespeak the reader's good-will. It were indeed to be wished that every man would early learn in this manner to make his own; that he would draw it up in terms as flattering as possible, and that he would make it the employment of his whole life to deserve it!

I have not yet been in a place called Westminster Abbey, but soon intend to visit it. There, I am told, I shall see justice done to deceased merit: none, I am told, are permitted to be buried there but such as have adorned as well as improved mankind. There no intruders, by the influence of friends or fortune, presume to mix their unhallowed ashes with philosophers, heroes, and poets. Nothing but true merit has a place in that awful sanctuary. The guardianship of the tombs is committed to several reverend priests, who are never guilty for a superior reward of taking down the names of good men, to make room for others of equivocal character, nor ever profane the sacred walls with pageants that posterity cannot know, or shall blush to own.

I always was of opinion that sepulchral honours of this kind should be considered as a national concern, and not trusted to the care of the priests of any country, how respectable soever; but from the conduct of the reverend personages, whose disinterested patriotism I shall shortly be able to discover, I am taught to retract my former sentiments. It is true, the Spartans and the Persians made a fine political use of sepulchral vanity; they per-

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mitted none to be thus interred who had not fallen in the vindication of their country. A monument thus became a real mark of distinction; it nerved the hero's arm with tenfold vigour, and he fought without fear who only fought for a grave. Farewell.

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LETTER XIII

A VISIT TO WESTMINSTER ABBEY

From the Same

I AM just returned from Westminster Abbey, the place of sepulture for the philosophers, heroes, and kings of England. What a gloom do monumental inscriptions, and all the venerable remains of deceased merit, inspire! Imagine a temple marked with the hand of antiquity, solemn as religious awe, adorned with all the magnificence of barbarous profusion, dim windows, fretted pillars, long colonnades, and dark ceilings. Think, then, what were my sensations at being introduced to such a scene. I stood in the midst of the temple, and threw my eyes round on the walls, filled with the statues, the inscriptions, and the monuments of the dead.

Alas! I said to myself, how does pride attend the puny child of dust even to the grave! Even humble as I am I possess more consequence in the present scene than the greatest hero of them all: they have toiled for an hour to gain a transient immor-

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tality, and are at length retired to the grave where they have no attendant but the worm, none to flatter but the epitaph.

As I was indulging such reflections, a gentleman, dressed in black, perceiving me to be a stranger, came up, entered into conversation, and politely offered to be my instructor and guide through the temple. "If any monument," said he, "should particularly excite your curiosity, I shall endeavour to satisfy your demands." I accepted with thanks the gentleman's offer, adding that I was "come to observe the policy, the wisdom, and the justice of the English, in conferring rewards upon deceased merit. If adulation like this," continued I, "be properly conducted, as it can no ways injure those who are flattered, so it may be a glorious incentive to those who are now capable of enjoying it. It is the duty of every good government to turn this monumental pride to its own advantage; to become strong in the aggregate from the weakness of the individual. If none but the truly great have a place in this awful repository, a temple like this will give the finest lessons of morality, and be a strong incentive to true ambition. I am told that none have a place here but characters of the most distinguished merit." The Man in Black seemed impatient at my observations; so I discontinued my remarks, and we walked on together to take a view of every particular monument in order as it lay.

As the eye is naturally caught by the finest ob-

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jects, I could not avoid being particularly curious about one monument, which appeared more beautiful than the rest. "That," said I to my guide, "I take to be the tomb of some very great man. By the peculiar excellence of the workmanship, and the magnificence of the design, this must be a trophy raised to the memory of some king who has saved his country from ruin, or law-giver, who has reduced his fellow-citizens from anarchy into just subjection." "It is not requisite," replied my companion smiling, "to have such qualifications in order to have a very fine monument here. More humble abilities will suffice." "What! I suppose, then, the gaining two or three battles, or the taking half a score towns, is thought a sufficient qualification?" "Gaining battles, or taking towns," replied the Man in Black, "may be of service; but a gentleman may have a very fine monument here without ever seeing a battle or a siege." "This, then, is the monument of some poet, I presume, of one whose wit has gained him immortality?" "No, Sir," replied my guide, "the gentleman who lies here never made verses; and as for wit, he despised it in others, because he had none himself." "Pray tell me then, in a word," said I peevishly, "what is the great man who lies here particularly remarkable for?" "Remarkable, Sir!" said my companion; "why, Sir, the gentleman that lies here is remarkable, very remarkable—for a tomb in Westminster Abbey." "But, head of my ancestors! how has he got here? I fancy he could never bribe the

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guardians of the temple to give him a place. Should he not be ashamed to be seen among company where even moderate merit would look like infamy?" "I suppose," replied the Man in Black, "the gentleman was rich, and his friends, as is usual in such a case, told him he was great. He readily believed them; the guardians of the temple, as they got by the self-delusion, were ready to believe him too; so he paid his money for a fine monument; and the workman, as you see, has made him one of the most beautiful. Think not, however, that this gentleman is singular in his desire of being buried among the great; there are several others in the temple, who, hated and shunned by the great while alive, have come here, fully resolved to keep them company now they are dead."

As he walked along to a particular part of the temple, "There," says the gentleman, pointing with his finger, "that is the Poet's Corner; there you see the monuments of Shakespeare, and Milton, and Prior, and Drayton." "Drayton!" I replied, "I never heard of him before;[1] but I have been told of one Pope; is he there?" "It is time enough," replied my guide, "these hundred years; he is not

[1] Michael Drayton, author of the *Poly-Olbion* (d. 1631). His monument in Westminster Abbey, erected at the expense of the famous Anne Pembroke, Dorset, and Montgomery, bears the well-known epitaph—

"Do, pious marble, let thy readers know
What they and what their children owe
To Drayton's name," etc.—

generally attributed to Ben Jonson, though there is reason to believe that it was actually written by Quarles.

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long dead; people have not done hating him yet." "Strange," cried I, "can any be found to hate a man whose life was wholly spent in entertaining and instructing his fellow-creatures?" "Yes," says my guide, "they hate him for that very reason. There are a set of men called answerers of books, who take upon them to watch the republic of letters, and distribute reputation by the sheet; they somewhat resemble the eunuchs in a seraglio, who are incapable of giving pleasure themselves, and hinder those that would. These answerers have no other employment but to cry out Dunce, and Scribbler; to praise the dead, and revile the living; to grant a man of confessed abilities some small share of merit; to applaud twenty blockheads, in order to gain the reputation of candour; and to revile the moral character of the man whose writings they cannot injure. Such wretches are kept in pay by some mercenary bookseller, or more frequently the bookseller himself [1] takes their dirty work off their hands, as all that is required is to be very abusive and very dull. Every poet of any genius is sure to find such enemies; he feels, though he seems to despise, their malice; they make him miserable here, and in the pursuit of empty fame, at last he gains solid anxiety."

"Has this been the case with every poet I see here?" cried I. "Yes, with every mother's son of

[1] All this is aimed at Griffiths, the publisher and proprietor of the *Monthly Review*, and the review by Kenrick of Goldsmith's "Enquiry" in that publication.

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them," replied he, "except he happened to be born a mandarin. If he has much money, he may buy reputation from your book-answerers, as well as a monument from the guardians of the temple."

"But are there not some men of distinguished taste, as in China, who are willing to patronise men of merit, and soften the rancour of malevolent dulness?" "I own there are many," replied the Man in Black, "but, alas! Sir, the book-answerers crowd about them, and call themselves the writers of books; and the patron is too indolent to distinguish; thus poets are kept at a distance, while their enemies eat up all their rewards at the mandarin's table."

Leaving this part of the temple, we made up to an iron gate, through which my companion told me we were to pass, in order to see the monuments of the kings. Accordingly I marched up without further ceremony, and was going to enter, when a person, who held the gate in his hand, told me I must pay first.[1] I was surprised at such a demand; and asked the man whether the people of England kept a show? whether the paltry sum he demanded was not a national reproach? whether it was not more to the honour of the country to let their magnificence or their antiquities be openly seen, than thus meanly to tax a curiosity which

[1] The passage from Poet's Corner to the western door was long a public thoroughfare. The Chinese had therefore seen the monuments in Poet's Corner without payment. This was not always the case.

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tended to their own honour? "As for your questions," replied the gate-keeper, "to be sure they may be very right, because I don't understand them; but, as for that there threepence, I farm it from one—who rents it from another—who hires it from a third—who leases it from the guardians of the temple, and we all must live." I expected, upon paying here, to see something extraordinary, since what I had seen for nothing filled me with so much surprise: but in this I was disappointed; there was little more within than black coffins, rusty armour, tattered standards, and some few slovenly figures in wax.[1] I was sorry I had paid, but I comforted myself by considering it would be my last payment. A person attended us, who, without once blushing, told an hundred lies; he talked of a lady who died by pricking her finger;[2] of a king with a golden head,[3] and twenty such pieces of absurdity. "Look ye there, gentlemen," says he, pointing to an old oak chair, "there 's a curiosity for ye; in that chair the kings of England were crowned: you see also a stone underneath, and that stone is Jacob's pillow." I could see no curiosity either in the oak chair, or the stone: could I, indeed, behold one of the old kings of England seated in this, or Jacob's head laid upon the other, there might be something

[1] The Duke of Albemarle, the Duchess of Richmond (La Belle Stuart), etc., long familiarly known as "The Ragged Regiment."

[2] Elizabeth Russell, in the chapel of St. Edmund.

[3] He means with a *silver* head. The head of the effigy of Henry V. was of silver.

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curious in the sight; but in the present case there was no more reason for my surprise than if I should pick a stone from their streets, and call it a curiosity, merely because one of the kings happened to tread upon it as he passed in a procession.

From hence our conductor led us through several dark walks and winding ways, uttering lies, talking to himself, and flourishing a wand which he held in his hand. He reminded me of the black magicians of Kobi. After we had been almost fatigued with a variety of objects, he at last desired me to consider attentively a certain suit of armour, which seemed to show nothing remarkable. "This armour," said he, "belonged to General Monk." "Very surprising, that a general should wear armour."—"And pray," added he, "observe this cap, this is General Monk's cap." "Very strange indeed, very strange, that a general should have a cap also! Pray, friend, what might this cap have cost originally?" "That, Sir," says he, "I don't know; but this cap is all the wages I have for my trouble." "A very small recompense truly," said I. "Not so very small," replied he, "for every gentleman puts some money into it, and I spend the money." "What, more money! still more money!" "Every gentleman gives something, Sir." "I'll give thee nothing," returned I: "the guardians of the temple should pay you your wages, friend, and not permit you to squeeze thus from every spectator. When we pay our money at the door to see a show, we never give more as we

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are going out. Sure, the guardians of the temple can never think they get enough. Show me the gate; if I stay longer, I may probably meet with more of those ecclesiastical beggars."

Thus leaving the temple precipitately, I returned to my lodgings, in order to ruminate over what was great, and to despise what was mean, in the occurrences of the day.[1]

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[1] "*Johnson.* I remember once being with Goldsmith in Westminster Abbey. While we surveyed the Poet's Corner, I said to him,

Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis.

When we got to Temple Bar he stopped me, pointed to the heads upon it, and slily whispered me,

Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis."

BOSWELL *by* CROKER, p. 258.

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LETTER XIV

THE RECEPTION OF THE CHINESE FROM A LADY OF DISTINCTION

From the Same

I WAS some days ago agreeably surprised by a message from a lady of distinction, who sent me word that she most passionately desired the pleasure of my acquaintance and, with the utmost impatience, expected an interview. I will not deny, my dear Fum Hoam, but that my vanity was raised at such an invitation: I flattered myself that she had seen me in some public place, and had conceived an affection for my person, which thus induced her to deviate from the usual decorums of the sex. My imagination painted her in all the bloom of youth and beauty. I fancied her attended by the loves and graces; and I set out with the most pleasing expectations of seeing the conquest I had made.

When I was introduced into her apartment, my expectations were quickly at an end; I perceived a little shrivelled figure indolently reclined on a

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THE RECEPTION OF THE CHINESE FROM A LADY OF DISTINCTION

From the Same

"When I was introduced into her apartment,

I WAS this morning agreeably surprised by a message from a lady of distinction, who sent me word that she most passionately desired the pleasure of my acquaintance and, with the utmost impatience, expected an interview. I will not deny, my dear Fum Hoam, but that my vanity was raised at such an invitation: I flattered myself that she had seen me in some public place, and had conceived an affection for my person, which thus induced her to deviate from the usual decorums of the sex. My imagination painted her in all the bloom of youth and beauty. I fancied her attended by the loves and graces; and I set out with the most pleasing expectations of seeing the conquest I had made.

When I was introduced into her apartment, my expectations were quickly at an end; I perceived a little shrivelled figure indolently reclined on a

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sofa, who nodded by way of approbation at my approach. This, as I was afterwards informed, was the lady herself, a woman equally distinguished for rank, politeness, taste, and understanding. As I was dressed after the fashion of Europe, she had taken me for an Englishman, and consequently saluted me in her ordinary manner; but when the footman informed her grace that I was the gentleman from China, she instantly lifted herself from the couch, while her eyes sparkled with unusual vivacity. "Bless me! can this be the gentleman that was born so far from home? What an unusual share of *somethingness* in his whole appearance! Lord, how I am charmed with the outlandish cut of his face! how bewitching the exotic breadth of his forehead! I would give the world to see him in his own country dress. Pray turn about, sir, and let me see you behind. There! there 's a travell'd air for you. You that attend there, bring up a plate of beef cut into small pieces; I have a violent passion to see him eat. Pray, Sir, have you got your chopsticks about you? [1] It will be so pretty to see the meat carried to the mouth with a jerk. Pray speak a little Chinese: I have learned some of the language myself. Lord! have you nothing pretty from China about you; something that one does not know what to do with? I

[1] Two slender sticks, or porcupine quills, by the means of which, placed between the thumb and the two first fingers of the right hand, the Chinese throw their food, with great expedition, into their mouths.

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have got twenty things from China that are of no use in the world. Look at those jars, they are of the right pea-green; these are the furniture." "Dear Madam," said I, "these, though they may appear fine in your eyes, are but paltry to a Chinese; but, as they are useful utensils, it is proper they should have a place in every apartment." "Useful! Sir," replied the lady, "sure you mistake, they are of no use in the world." "What! are they not filled with an infusion of tea as in China?" replied I. "Quite empty and useless, upon my honour, Sir." "Then they are the most cumbrous and clumsy furniture in the world, as nothing is truly elegant but what unites use with beauty." "I protest," says the lady, "I shall begin to suspect thee of being an actual barbarian. I suppose you hold my two beautiful pagods in contempt." "What!" cried I, "has Fohi spread his gross superstitions here also? Pagods of all kinds are my aversion." "A Chinese, a traveller, and want taste! it surprises me. Pray, Sir, examine the beauties of that Chinese temple which you see at the end of the garden. Is there anything in China more beautiful?" "Where I stand, I see nothing, Madam, at the end of the garden, that may not as well be called an Egyptian pyramid as a Chinese temple; for that little building in view is as like the one as t' other." "What! Sir, is not that a Chinese temple? you must surely be mistaken. Mr. Freeze, who designed it, calls it one, and nobody disputes his pretensions to taste." I now found it vain to

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contradict the lady in anything she thought fit to advance; so was resolved rather to act the disciple than the instructor. She took me through several rooms all furnished, as she told me, in the Chinese manner; sprawling dragons, squatting pagods, and clumsy mandarins were stuck upon every shelf: in turning round, one must have used caution not to demolish a part of the precarious furniture.

In a house like this, thought I, one must live continually upon the watch; the inhabitant must resemble a knight in an enchanted castle, who expects to meet an adventure at every turning. "But, Madam," said I, "do no accidents ever happen to all this finery?" "Man, Sir," replied the lady, "is born to misfortunes, and it is but fit I should have a share. Three weeks ago, a careless servant snapped off the head of a favourite mandarin. I had scarce done grieving for that, when a monkey broke a beautiful jar; this I took the more to heart, as the injury was done me by a friend. However, I survived the calamity; when yesterday, crash went half a dozen dragons upon the marble hearth-stone; and yet I live; I survive it all: you can't conceive what comfort I find under afflictions from philosophy. There is Seneca, and Bolingbroke, and some others, who guide me through life, and teach me to support calamities." I could not but smile at a woman who makes her own misfortunes and then deplores the miseries of her situation. Wherefore, tired of acting with

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dissimulation, and willing to indulge my meditations in solitude, I took leave just as the servant was bringing in a plate of beef, pursuant to the directions of his mistress. Adieu.

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LETTER XV

AGAINST CRUELTY TO ANIMALS—A STORY FROM THE ZEND-AVESTA OF ZOROASTER

From the Same

THE better sort here pretend to the utmost compassion for animals of every kind: to hear them speak, a stranger would be apt to imagine they could hardly hurt the gnat that stung them; they seem so tender, and so full of pity, that one would take them for the harmless friends of the whole creation, the protectors of the meanest insect or reptile that was privileged with existence. And yet (would you believe it?) I have seen the very men who have thus boasted of their tenderness at the same time devouring flesh of six different animals tossed up in a fricassee. Strange contrariety of conduct! they pity, and they eat the objects of their compassion! The lion roars with terror over its captive; the tiger sends forth its hideous shriek to intimidate its prey; no creature shows any fondness for its short-lived prisoner, except a man and a cat.

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coming once to his table. Were my advice followed, he should do penance in the shape of an hog, which in life he most resembled.'

"'I am rather,' cries a sheep upon the bench, 'for having him suffer under the appearance of a lamb; we may then send him through four or five transmigrations in the space of a month.' 'Were my voice of any weight in the assembly,' cries a calf, 'he should rather assume such a form as mine; I was bled every day, in order to make my flesh white, and at last killed without mercy.' 'Would it not be wiser,' cries a hen, 'to cram him in the shape of a fowl, and then smother him in his own blood, as I was served?' The majority of the assembly were pleased with this punishment, and were going to condemn him without further delay, when the ox rose up to give his opinion: 'I am informed,' says this counsellor, 'that the prisoner at the bar has left a wife with child behind him. By my knowledge in divination, I foresee that this child will be a son decrepid, feeble, sickly, a plague to himself and all about him. What say you, then, my companions, if we condemn the father to animate the body of his own son, and by this means make him feel in himself those miseries his intemperance must otherwise have entailed upon his posterity?' The whole court applauded the ingenuity of his torture; they thanked him for his advice. Kabul was driven once more to revisit the earth; and his soul, in the body of his own son, passed a period of thirty years, loaded with misery, anxiety, and disease."

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LETTER XVI

OF FALSEHOOD PROPAGATED BY BOOKS SEEMINGLY SINCERE

From the Same

I KNOW not whether I am more obliged to the Chinese missionaries for the instruction I have received from them, or prejudiced by the falsehoods they have made me believe. By them I was told that the Pope was universally allowed to be a man, and placed at the head of the Church; in England, however, they plainly prove him to be an whore in man's clothes, and often burn him in effigy as an impostor. A thousand books have been written on either side of the question: priests are eternally disputing against each other, and those mouths that want argument are filled with abuse. Which party must I believe, or shall I give credit to neither? When I survey the absurdities and falsehoods with which the books of the Europeans are filled, I thank Heaven for having been born in China, and that I have sagacity enough to detect imposture.

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The Europeans reproach us with false history and fabulous chronology: how should they blush to see their own books, many of which were written by the doctors of their religion, filled with the most monstrous fables, and attested with the utmost solemnity. The bounds of a letter do not permit me to mention all the absurdities of this kind which in my reading I have met with. I shall confine myself to the accounts which some of their lettered men give of the persons of some of the inhabitants on our globe; and, not satisfied with most solemn asseverations, they sometimes pretend to have been eyewitnesses of what they describe.

A Christian doctor, in one of his principal performances,[1] says that it was not impossible for a whole nation to have but one eye, in the middle of the forehead. He is not satisfied with leaving it in doubt; but in another work[2] assures us that the fact was certain, and that he himself was an eyewitness of it. "When," says he, "I took a journey into Ethiopia, in company with several other servants of Christ, in order to preach the gospel there, I beheld, in the southern provinces of that country, a nation which had only one eye, in the midst of their foreheads."

You will no doubt be surprised, reverend Fum, with this author's effrontery; but, alas! he is not alone in this story; he has only borrowed it from

[1] Augustin. *De Civit. Dei*, lib. xvi., p. 422.—GOLDSMITH.
[2] Id., *Ad Fratres in Eremo*. Serm. xxxvii.—GOLDSMITH.

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several others who wrote before him. Solinus creates another nation of Cyclops, the Arimaspians, who inhabit those countries that border on the Caspian Sea. This author goes on to tell us of a people of India who have but one leg and one eye, and yet are extremely active, run with great swiftness, and live by hunting. These people we scarce know how to pity or admire; but the men whom Pliny calls Cynamolci, who have got the heads of dogs, really deserve our compassion: instead of language, they express their sentiments by barking. Solinus confirms what Pliny mentions; and Simon Mayole, a French bishop,[1] talks of them as of particular and familiar acquaintances. "After passing the deserts of Egypt," says he, "we meet with the Kunokephaloi, who inhabit those regions that border on Ethiopia; they live by hunting; they cannot speak, but whistle; their chins resemble a serpent's head; their hands are armed with long sharp claws; their breast resembles that of a greyhound; and they excel in swiftness and agility." Would you think it, my friend, that these odd kind of people are, notwithstanding their figure, excessively delicate; not even an alderman's wife, or Chinese mandarin, can excel them in this particular. "These people," continues our faithful bishop, "never refuse wine; love roast and boiled meat: they are particularly curious in having their meat well-dressed, and spurn at it if in the least tainted.

[1] Simon Maiolo was *an Italian*, and bishop of Volturara. He was born at Asti in 1520 and died in 1597.

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When the Ptolemies reigned in Egypt," says he, a little farther on, "those men with dog's heads taught grammar and music." For men who had no voices to teach music, and who could not speak to teach grammar, is, I confess, a little extraordinary. Did ever the disciples of Fohi broach anything more ridiculous?

Hitherto we have seen men with heads strangely deformed, and with dog's heads; but what would you say if you heard of men without any heads at all? Pomponius Mela, Solinus, and Aulus Gellius describe them to our hand: "The Blemiæ have a nose, eyes, and mouth on their breasts; or, as others will have it, placed on their shoulders."

One would think that these authors had an antipathy to the human form, and were resolved to make a new figure of their own: but let us do them justice. Though they sometimes deprive us of a leg, an arm, an head, or some such trifling part of the body, they often as liberally bestow upon us something that we wanted before. Simon Mayole seems our particular friend in this respect: if he has denied heads to one part of mankind, he has given tails to another. He describes many of the English of his time, which is more than an hundred years ago,[1] as having tails. His own words are as follows: "In England there are some families which

[1] This is a mistake. Maiolo's *Dies Caniculares*, etc., was published at Rome, in 1576. A translation, by Rosset, appeared at Paris in 1643, with this title, *Les Jours Caniculaires; c'est à dire, vingt-trois excellents Discours des Choses Naturelles et Surnaturelles.*

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have tails, as a punishment for deriding an Augustin friar sent by St. Gregory, and who preached in Dorsetshire. They sewed the tails of different animals to his clothes; but soon they found those tails entailed on them and their posterity for ever." It is certain that the author had some ground for this description. Many of the English wear tails to their wigs to this very day, as a mark, I suppose, of the antiquity of their families, and perhaps as a symbol of those tails with which they were formerly distinguished by nature.[1]

You see, my friend, there is nothing so ridiculous that has not at some time been said by some philosopher. The writers of books in Europe seem to think themselves authorised to say what they please; and an ingenious philosopher among them [2] has openly asserted that he would undertake to persuade the whole republic of readers to believe that the sun was neither the cause of light nor heat, if he could only get six philosophers on his side. Farewell.

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[1] Little did Goldsmith imagine that, within ten years of the period at which he was writing, not indeed an Italian bishop, but a grave Scotch judge, would step forward to maintain that ouran-outangs are of the human species, and that even in the Bay of Bengal there exists a whole nation of men with tails.—See MONBODDO, *Orig. of Language*, vol. i., lib. ii., ch. 3.

[2] Fontenelle.—GOLDSMITH.

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LETTER XVII

OF THE WAR NOW CARRIED ON BETWEEN FRANCE AND ENGLAND, WITH ITS FRIVOLOUS MOTIVES

From the Same

WERE an Asiatic politician to read the treaties of peace and friendship that have been annually making for more than an hundred years among the inhabitants of Europe, he would probably be surprised how it should ever happen that Christian princes could quarrel among each other. Their compacts for peace are drawn up with the utmost precision, and ratified with the greatest solemnity; to these each party promises sincere and inviolable obedience, and all wears the appearance of open friendship and unreserved reconciliation.

Yet, notwithstanding those treaties, the people of Europe are almost continually at war. There is nothing more easy than to break a treaty ratified in all the usual forms, and yet neither party be the aggressor. One side, for instance, breaks a trifling article by mistake; the opposite party, upon this,

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makes a small but premeditated reprisal; this brings on a return of greater from the other; both sides complain of injuries and infractions; war is declared; they beat; are beaten; some two or three hundred thousand men are killed; they grow tired; leave off just where they began; and so sit coolly down to make new treaties.[1]

The English and French seem to place themselves foremost among the champion states of Europe. Though parted by a narrow sea, yet are they entirely of opposite characters; and from their vicinity are taught to fear and admire each other. They are at present engaged in a very destructive war, have already spilled much blood, are excessively irritated, and all upon account of one side's desiring to wear greater quantities of *furs* than the other.

The pretext of the war is about some lands a thousand leagues off; a country cold, desolate, and hideous; a country belonging to a people who were in possession for time immemorial. The savages of Canada claim a property in the country in dispute; they have all the pretensions which long

[1] "But what most show'd the vanity of life,
Was to behold the nations all on fire,
In cruel broils engag'd, and deadly strife:
Most Christian kings, inflam'd by black desire,
With honourable ruffians in their hire,
Cause war to rage, and blood around to pour;
Of this sad work when each begins to tire,
They sit them down just where they were before,
Till for new scenes of woe peace shall their force restore."
—THOMSON, *Castle of Indolence.*

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possession can confer. Here they had reigned for ages without rivals in dominion, and knew no enemies but the prowling bear or insidious tiger; their native forests produced all the necessaries of life, and they found ample luxury in the enjoyment. In this manner they might have continued to live to eternity, had not the English been informed that those countries produced furs in great abundance. From that moment the country became an object of desire: it was found that furs were things very much wanted in England; the ladies edged some of their clothes with furs, and muffs were worn both by gentlemen and ladies. In short, furs were found indispensably necessary for the happiness of the state; and the king was consequently petitioned to grant, not only the country of Canada, but all the savages belonging to it, to the subjects of England, in order to have the people supplied with proper quantities of this necessary commodity.

So very reasonable a request was immediately complied with, and large colonies were sent abroad to procure furs, and take possession. The French, who were equally in want of furs (for they were as fond of muffs and tippets as the English), made the very same request to their monarch, and met with the same gracious reception from their king, who generously granted what was not his to give. Wherever the French landed, they called the country their own; and the English took possession wherever they came upon the same equitable

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pretensions. The harmless savages made no opposition; and, could the intruders have agreed together, they might peaceably have shared this desolate country between them. But they quarrelled about the boundaries of their settlements, about grounds and rivers to which neither side could show any other right than that of power, and which neither could occupy but by usurpation. Such is the contest that no honest man can heartily wish success to either party.

The war has continued for some time with various success. At first the French seemed victorious, but the English have of late dispossessed them of the whole country in dispute. Think not, however, that success on one side is the harbinger of peace; on the contrary, both parties must be heartily tired to effect even a temporary reconciliation. It should seem the business of the victorious party to offer terms of peace; but there are many in England who, encouraged by success, are for still protracting the war.

The best English politicians, however, are sensible that to keep their present conquests would be rather a burden than an advantage to them; rather a diminution of their strength than an increase of power. It is in the politic as in the human constitution; if the limbs grow too large for the body, their size, instead of improving, will diminish the vigour of the whole. The colonies should always bear an exact proportion to the mother country; when they grow populous they grow powerful,

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and by becoming powerful they become independent also: thus, subordination is destroyed, and a country swallowed up in the extent of its own dominions. The Turkish empire would be more formidable were it less extensive—were it not for those countries which it can neither command nor give entirely away; which it is obliged to protect, but from which it has no power to exact obedience.

Yet, obvious as these truths are, there are many Englishmen who are for transplanting new colonies into this late acquisition, for peopling the deserts of America with the refuse of their countrymen, and (as they express it) with the waste of an exuberant nation. But who are those unhappy creatures who are to be thus drained away? Not the sickly, for they are unwelcome guests abroad as well as at home: nor the idle, for they would starve as well behind the Appalachian mountains as in the streets of London. This refuse is composed of the laborious and enterprising, of such men as can be serviceable to their country at home; of men who ought to be regarded as the sinews of the people, and cherished with every degree of political indulgence. And what are the commodities which this colony, when established, is to produce in return? Why, raw silk, hemp, and tobacco. England, therefore, must make an exchange of her best and bravest subjects for raw silk, hemp, and tobacco; her hardy veterans and honest tradesmen must be trucked for a box of snuff or a silk petticoat.

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Strange absurdity! Surely the politics of the Daures are not more strange, who sell their religion, their wives, and their liberty for a glass bead, or a paltry pen-knife. Farewell.

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LETTER XVIII

THE STORY OF THE CHINESE MATRON [1]

From the Same

THE English love their wives with much passion, the Hollanders with much prudence; the English, when they give their hands, frequently give their hearts; the Dutch give the hand, but keep the heart wisely in their own possession. The English love with violence, and expect violent love in return; the Dutch are satisfied with the slightest acknowledgment, for they give little away. The English expend many of the matrimonial comforts in the first year; the Dutch frugally husband out their pleasures, and are always constant because they are always indifferent.

There seems very little difference between a Dutch bridegroom and a Dutch husband. Both are equally possessed of the same cool unexpecting

[1] The agreeable little story of which Goldsmith has here given an abridgment was translated from Chinese into French by Père Dentrecolles, superintendent-general of the French missionaries in China, who died at Pekin in 1741.

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serenity; they can see neither elysium nor paradise behind the curtain; and Yiffrow is not more a goddess on the wedding-night than after twenty years' matrimonial acquaintance. On the other hand, many of the English marry in order to have one happy month in their lives: they seem incapable of looking beyond that period; they unite in hopes of finding rapture, and, disappointed in that, disdain ever to accept of happiness. From hence we see open hatred ensue; or what is worse, concealed disgust under the appearance of fulsome endearment. Much formality, great civility, and studied compliments are exhibited in public; cross looks, sulky silence, or open recrimination fill up their hours of private entertainment.

Hence I am taught, whenever I see a new-married couple more than ordinarily fond before faces, to consider them as attempting to impose upon the company or themselves; either hating each other heartily, or consuming that stock of love in the beginning of their course which should serve them through their whole journey. Neither side should expect those instances of kindness which are inconsistent with true freedom or happiness to bestow. Love, when founded in the heart, will show itself in a thousand unpremeditated sallies of fondness; but every cool deliberate exhibition of the passion only argues little understanding, or great insincerity.

Choang was the fondest husband, and Hansi the most endearing wife in all the kingdom of Korea:

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they were a pattern of conjugal bliss; the inhabitants of the country around saw and envied their felicity; wherever Choang came, Hansi was sure to follow; and in all the pleasures of Hansi, Choang was admitted a partner. They walked hand in hand wherever they appeared, showing every mark of mutual satisfaction; embracing, kissing, their mouths were for ever joined, and, to speak in the language of anatomy, it was with them one perpetual anastomosis.

Their love was so great that it was thought nothing could interrupt their mutual peace, when an accident happened which, in some measure, diminished the husband's assurance of his wife's fidelity; for love so refined as his was subject to a thousand little disquietudes.

Happening to go one day alone among the tombs that lay at some distance from his house, he there perceived a lady dressed in the deepest mourning (being clothed all over in white [1]), fanning the wet clay that was raised over one of the graves with a large fan, which she held in her hand. Choang, who had early been taught wisdom in the school of Lao, was unable to assign a cause for her present employment; and, coming up, civilly demanded the reason. "Alas," replied the lady, her eyes bathed in tears, how is it possible to survive

[1] "The mourning for the nearest relations in the first degree shall be worn for three years, and shall be made of the coarsest white cloth, without being sewn at the borders."—STAUNTON, *Laws of China*, p. 75.

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the loss of my husband, who lies buried in this grave! He was the best of men, the tenderest of husbands; with his dying breath he bid me never marry again [1] till the earth over his grave should be dry; and here you see me steadily resolving to obey his will, and endeavouring to dry it with my fan. I have employed two whole days in fulfilling his commands, and am determined not to marry till they are punctually obeyed, even though his grave should take up four days in drying."

Choang, who was struck with the widow's beauty, could not, however, avoid smiling at her haste to be married; but, concealing the cause of his mirth, civilly invited her home, adding that he had a wife who might be capable of giving her some consolation. As soon as he and his guest were returned, he imparted to Hansi in private what he had seen, and could not avoid expressing his uneasiness, that such might be his own case if his dearest wife should one day happen to survive him.

It is impossible to describe Hansi's resentment at so unkind a suspicion. As her passion for him was not only great, but extremely delicate, she employed tears, anger, frowns, and exclamations, to chide his suspicions: the widow herself was inveighed against; and Hansi declared she was resolved never to sleep under the same roof with a wretch who, like her, could be guilty of such

[1] In China second marriages are rare on the part of the women, and reflect some discredit on the widows.

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barefaced inconstancy. The night was cold and stormy; however, the stranger was obliged to seek another lodging, for Choang was not disposed to resist, and Hansi would have her way.

The widow had scarce been gone an hour when an old disciple of Choang's, whom he had not seen for many years, came to pay him a visit, He was received with the utmost ceremony, placed in the most honourable seat at supper, and the wine began to circulate with great freedom. Choang and Hansi exhibited open marks of mutual tenderness, and unfeigned reconciliation: nothing could equal their apparent happiness; so fond a husband, so obedient a wife, few could behold without regretting their own infelicity. When lo! their happiness was at once disturbed by a most fatal accident. Choang fell lifeless in an apoplectic fit upon the floor. Every method was used, but in vain, for his recovery. Hansi was at first inconsolable for his death: after some hours, however, she found spirits to read his last will. The ensuing day she began to moralise and talk wisdom; the next day she was able to comfort the young disciple; and on the third, to shorten a long story, they both agreed to be married.

There was now no longer mourning in the apartments; the body of Choang was now thrust into an old coffin, and placed in one of the meanest rooms, there to lie unattended until the time prescribed by law for his interment. In the mean time, Hansi and the young disciple were arrayed

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in the most magnificent habits; the bride wore in her nose a jewel of immense price, and her lover was dressed in all the finery of his former master, together with a pair of artificial whiskers that reached down to his toes. The hour of their nuptials was arrived; the whole family sympathised with their approaching happiness; the apartments were brightened up with lights that diffused the most exquisite perfume, and a lustre more bright than noonday. The lady expected her youthful lover in an inner apartment with impatience; when his servant, approaching with terror in his countenance, informed her that his master was fallen in a fit, which would certainly be mortal unless the heart of a man lately dead could be obtained, and applied to his breast. She scarcely waited to hear the end of his story, when, tucking up her clothes, she ran with a mattock in her hand to the coffin where Choang lay, resolving to apply the heart of her dead husband as a cure for the living. She therefore struck the lid with the utmost violence. In a few blows the coffin flew open, when the body, which to all appearance had been dead, began to move. Terrified at the sight, Hansi dropped the mattock, and Choang walked out, astonished at his own situation, his wife's unusual magnificence, and her more amazing surprise. He went among the apartments, unable to conceive the cause of so much splendour. He was not long in suspense before his domestics informed him of every transaction since he first be-

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came insensible. He could scarcely believe what they told him, and went in pursuit of Hansi herself in order to receive more certain information, or to reproach her infidelity. But she prevented his reproaches: he found her weltering in blood; for she had stabbed herself to the heart, being unable to survive her shame and disappointment.

Choang, being a philosopher, was too wise to make any loud lamentations: he thought it best to bear his loss with serenity; so, mending up the old coffin where he had lain himself, he placed his faithless spouse in his room; and, unwilling that so many nuptial preparations should be expended in vain, he the same night married the widow with the large fan.

As they both were apprised of the foibles of each other beforehand, they knew how to excuse them after marriage. They lived together for many years in great tranquillity, and, not expecting rapture, made a shift to find contentment. Farewell.

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LETTER XIX

THE ENGLISH METHOD OF TREATING WOMEN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY—THE RUSSIAN METHOD

To the Same

THE gentleman dressed in black, who was my companion through Westminster Abbey, came yesterday to pay me a visit; and after drinking tea, we both resolved to take a walk together, in order to enjoy the freshness of the country, which now begins to resume its verdure. Before we got out of the suburbs, however, we were stopped in one of the streets by a crowd of people, gathered in a circle round a man and his wife, who seemed too loud and too angry to be understood. The people were highly pleased with the dispute, which upon inquiry we found to be between Dr. Cacafogo, an apothecary, and his wife. The doctor, it seems, coming unexpectedly into his wife's apartment, found a gentleman there, in circumstances not in the least equivocal.

The doctor, who was a person of nice honour, resolving to revenge the flagrant insult, immedi-

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ately flew to the chimney-piece, and, taking down a rusty blunderbuss, drew the trigger upon the defiler of his bed: the delinquent would certainly have been shot through the head, but that the piece had not been charged for many years. The gallant made a shift to escape through the window, but the lady still remained; and, as she well knew her husband's temper, undertook to manage the quarrel without a second. He was furious, and she loud; their noise had gathered all the mob who charitably assembled on the occasion, not to prevent, but to enjoy the quarrel.

"Alas!" said I to my companion, "what will become of this unhappy creature thus caught in adultery? Believe me, I pity her from my heart; her husband, I suppose, will show her no mercy. Will they burn her, as in India, or behead her, as in Persia? Will they load her with stripes, as in Turkey, or keep her in perpetual imprisonment, as with us in China?[1] Prythee, what is the wife's punishment in England for such offences?" "When a lady is thus caught tripping," replied my companion, "they never punish her, but the husband." "You surely jest," interrupted I; "I am a foreigner, and you would abuse my ignorance!" "I am really serious," returned he. "Dr. Cacafogo has caught his wife in the act; but, as he had no witnesses, his small testimony goes for nothing; the consequence, therefore, of his dis-

[1] In China, women can never be imprisoned except for capital offences, or for adultery.

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covery will be that she will be packed off to live among her relations, and the doctor must be obliged to allow her a separate maintenance." "Amazing!" cried I; "is it not enough that she is permitted to live separate from the object she detests, but must he give her money to keep her in spirits too?" "That he must," said my guide, and be called a cuckold by all his neighbours into the bargain. The men will laugh at him, the ladies will pity him; and all that his warmest friends can say in his favour will be, that 'the poor good soul has never had any harm in him.'" "I want patience," interrupted I; "what! are there no private chastisements for the wife; no schools of penitence to show her her folly; no blows for such delinquents?"[1] "Psha, man," replied he, smiling, "if every delinquent among us were to be treated in your manner, one half the kingdom would flog the other."

I must confess, my dear Fum, that if I were an English husband, of all things I would take care not to be jealous, nor busily pry into those secrets my wife was pleased to keep from me. Should I detect her infidelity, what is the consequence? If I calmly pocket the abuse, I am laughed at by her and her gallant; if I talk my griefs aloud like a tragedy hero, I am laughed at by the whole world. The course then I would take would be, whenever

[1] "Criminal intercourse with a married woman shall be punished with eighty blows: deliberate intrigue with a married or unmarried woman shall be punished with one hundred blows."—STAUNTON, *Laws of China*, p. 404.

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I went out, to tell my wife where I was going, lest I should unexpectedly meet her abroad in company with some dear deceiver. Whenever I returned, I would use a peculiar rap at the door, and give four loud hems as I walked deliberately up the staircase. I would never inquisitively peep under her bed, or look behind the curtains. And even though I knew the captain was there, I would calmly take a dish of my wife's cool tea, and talk of the army with reverence.

Of all nations, the Russians seem to me to behave most wisely in such circumstances. The wife promises her husband never to let him see her transgressions of this nature; and he as punctually promises, whenever she is so detected, without the least anger, to beat her without mercy; so they both know what each is to expect; the lady transgresses, is beaten, taken again into favour, and all goes on as before.

When a Russian young lady, therefore, is to be married, her father, with a cudgel in his hand, asks the bridegroom whether he chooses this virgin for his bride, to which the other replies in the affirmative. Upon this, the father, turning the lady three times around, and giving her three strokes with his cudgel on the back—"My dear," he cries, "these are the last blows you are ever to receive from your tender father; I resign my authority, and my cudgel, to your husband; he knows better than me the use of either." The bridegroom knows decorums too well to accept of the cudgel abruptly;

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he assures the father that the lady will never want it, and that he would not, for the world, make any use of it; but the father, who knows what the lady may want better than he, insists upon his acceptance; upon this there follows a scene of Russian politeness, while one refuses and the other offers the cudgel. The whole, however, ends with the bridegroom's taking it; upon which the lady drops a curtsey in token of obedience and the ceremony proceeds as usual.

There is something excessively fair and open in this method of courtship: by this, both sides are prepared for all the matrimonial adventures that are to follow. Marriage has been compared to a game of skill for life: it is generous thus in both parties to declare they are sharpers in the beginning. In England, I am told, both sides use every art to conceal their defects from each other before marriage, and the rest of their lives may be regarded as doing penance for their former dissimulation. Farewell.

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LETTER XX

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LETTERS IN ENGLAND

From the Same

THE Republic of Letters is a very common expression among the Europeans; and yet, when applied to the learned of Europe, is the most absurd that can be imagined, since nothing is more unlike a republic than the society which goes by that name. From this expression, one would be apt to imagine that the learned were united into a single body, joining their interests and concurring in the same design. From this, one might be apt to compare them to our literary societies in China, where each acknowledges a just subordination, and all contribute to build the temple of science, without attempting, from ignorance or envy, to obstruct each other.

But very different is the state of learning here: every member of this fancied republic is desirous of governing, and none willing to obey; each looks upon his fellow as a rival, not an assistant in the

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same pursuit. They calumniate, they injure, they despise, they ridicule each other; if one man writes a book that pleases, others shall write books to show that he might have given still greater pleasure or should not have pleased. If one happens to hit upon something new, there are numbers ready to assure the public that all this was no novelty to them or the learned; that Cardanus, or Brunus, or some other author too dull to be generally read, had anticipated the discovery. Thus, instead of uniting like the members of a commonwealth, they are divided into almost as many factions as there are men; and their jarring constitution, instead of being styled a republic of letters, should be entitled an anarchy of literature.

It is true, there are some of superior abilities who reverence and esteem each other; but their mutual admiration is not sufficient to shield off the contempt of the crowd. The wise are but few, and they praise with a feeble voice; the vulgar are many, and roar in reproaches. The truly great seldom unite in societies; have few meetings, no cabals; the dunces hunt in full cry till they have run down a reputation, and then snarl and fight with each other about dividing the spoil. Here you may see the compilers and the book-answerers of every month, when they have cut up some respectable name, most frequently reproaching each other with stupidity and dulness; resembling the wolves of the Russian forest, who prey upon venison, or horse-flesh, when they can get it;

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but in cases of necessity lying in wait to devour each other. While they have new books to cut up, they make a hearty meal; but if this resource should unhappily fail, then it is that critics eat up critics, and compilers rob from compilations.

Confucius observes that it is the duty of the learned to unite society more closely, and to persuade men to become citizens of the world; but the authors I refer to are not only for disuniting society but kingdoms also; if the English are at war with France, the dunces of France think it their duty to be at war with those of England. Thus Fréron, one of their first-rate scribblers, thinks proper to characterise all the English writers in the gross: "Their whole merit," says he, "consists in exaggeration and often in extravagance: correct their pieces as you please, there still remains a leaven which corrupts the whole. They sometimes discover genius, but not the smallest share of taste: England is not a soil for the plants of genius to thrive in." This is open enough, with not the least adulation in the picture; but hear what a Frenchman of acknowledged abilities says upon the same subject: "I am at a loss to determine in what we excel the English, or where they excel us; when I compare the merits of both in any one species of literary composition, so many reputable and pleasing writers present themselves from either country, that my judgment rests in suspense: I am pleased with the disquisition, without finding the object of my inquiry." But

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lest you should think the French alone are faulty in this respect, hear how an English journalist delivers his sentiments of them: "We are amazed," says he, "to find so many works translated from the French, while we have such numbers neglected of our own. In our opinion, notwithstanding their fame throughout the rest of Europe, the French are the most contemptible reasoners (we had almost said writers) that can be imagined. However, nevertheless, excepting," etc. Another English writer, Shaftesbury, if I remember, on the contrary says, that the French authors are pleasing and judicious, more clear, more methodical and entertaining, than those of his own country.

From these opposite pictures you perceive that the good authors of either country praise and the bad revile each other; and yet, perhaps, you will be surprised that indifferent writers should thus be the most apt to censure, as they have the most to apprehend from recrimination: you may perhaps imagine that such as are possessed of fame themselves should be most ready to declare their opinions, since what they say might pass for decision. But the truth happens to be that the great are solicitous only of raising their own reputations, while the opposite class, alas! are solicitous of bringing every reputation down to a level with their own.

But let us acquit them of malice and envy. A critic is often guided by the same motives that direct his author: the author endeavours to per-

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suade us that he has written a good book; the critic is equally solicitous to show that he could write a better, had he thought proper. A critic is a being possessed of all the vanity, but not the genius, of a scholar; incapable, from his native weakness, of lifting himself from the ground, he applies to contiguous merit for support; makes the sportive sallies of another's imagination his serious employment; pretends to take our feelings under his care, teaches where to condemn, where to lay the emphasis of praise; and may with as much justice be called a man of taste as the Chinese, who measures his wisdom by the length of his nails.[1]

If then a book, spirited or humorous, happens to appear in the republic of letters, several critics are in waiting to bid the public not to laugh at a single line of it, for themselves had read it, and they know what is most proper to excite laughter. Other critics contradict the fulminations of this tribunal, call them all spiders, and assure the public that they ought to laugh without restraint. Another set are in the mean time quietly employed in writing notes to the book, intended to show the particular passages to be laughed at; when these

[1] "In China, it is fashionable in both men and women to allow the nails of the left hand to grow to an inordinate length, until they assume an appearance very like the claws of the bradypus, as represented in Sir Charles Bell's work on the 'Hand.' The brittleness of the nail rendering it liable to break, they have been known sometimes to protect it, when very long, by means of thin slips of bamboo."—DAVIS's *Chinese*, vol. i., p. 267.

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are out, others still there are who write notes upon notes; thus a single new book employs not only the paper-makers, the printers, the pressmen, the bookbinders, the hawkers, but twenty critics, and as many compilers. In short, the body of the learned may be compared to a Persian army, where there are many pioneers, several sutlers, numberless servants, women and children in abundance, and but few soldiers. Adieu.

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LETTER XXI

THE CHINESE GOES TO SEE A PLAY

To the Same.

THE English are as fond of seeing plays acted as the Chinese; but there is a vast difference in the manner of conducting them. We play our pieces in the open air, the English theirs under cover; we act by daylight, they by the blaze of torches. One of our plays continues eight or ten days successively;[1] an English piece seldom takes up above four hours in the representation.

My companion in black, with whom I am now beginning to contract an intimacy, introduced me a few nights ago to the playhouse, where we placed ourselves conveniently at the foot of the stage. As the curtain was not drawn before my arrival, I had an opportunity of observing the behaviour

[1] "The Chinese government give countenance to spectacles for the people, by permitting them to be erected in every street by subscriptions among the inhabitants. The principal public occasions of these performances are certain annual festivals of a religious nature, when temporary theatres, constructed of bamboos and mats, are erected in front of their temples, or in open spaces through their

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of the spectators, and indulging those reflections which novelty generally inspires.

The richest in general were placed in the lowest seats, and the poor rose above them in degrees proportioned to their poverty. The order of precedence seemed here inverted; those who were undermost all the day now enjoyed a temporary eminence, and became masters of the ceremonies. It was they who called for the music, indulging every noisy freedom, and testifying all the insolence of beggary in exaltation.

They who held the middle region seemed not so riotous as those above them, nor yet so tame as those below: to judge by their looks, many of them seemed strangers there as well as myself; they were chiefly employed during this period of expectation in eating oranges, reading the story of the play, or making assignations.

Those who sat in the lowest rows, which are

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towns, the spectacle being continued for several days together. The players, in general, come literally under our legal definition of vagabonds, as they consist of strolling bands of ten or a dozen, whose merit and rank in their profession, and consequently their pay, differ widely accordingly to circumstances. The female parts are never performed by women, but generally by boys. They have no scenical deception to assist the story, and the odd expedients to which they are in consequence sometimes driven are not many degrees above Nick Bottom's 'bush of thorns and a lanthorn, to present the person of Moonshine.' Thus, a general is ordered upon an expedition to a distant province; he brandishes a whip, or takes in his hand the reins of a bridle, and striding three or four times round the stage, in the midst of a tremendous crash of gongs, drums, and trumpets, he stops short, and tells the audience where he has arrived."—DAVIS's *View of the Chinese Drama*.

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called the pit, seemed to consider themselves as judges of the merit of the poet and the performers; they were assembled partly to be amused, and partly to show their taste: appearing to labour under that restraint which an affectation of superior discernment generally produces. My companion, however, informed me that not one in an hundred of them knew even the first principles of criticism; that they assumed the right of being censors, because there was none to contradict their pretensions; and that every man who now called himself a connoisseur, became such to all intents and purposes.

Those who sat in the boxes appeared in the most unhappy situation of all. The rest of the audience came merely for their own amusement; these rather to furnish out a part of the entertainment themselves. I could not avoid considering them as acting parts in dumb show; not a curtsey or nod that was not the result of art; not a look nor a smile that was not designed for murder. Gentlemen and ladies ogled each other through spectacles, for my companion observed that blindness was of late become fashionable; all affected indifference and ease, while their hearts at the same time burned for conquest. Upon the whole the lights, the music, the ladies in their gayest dresses, the men with cheerfulness and expectation in their looks, all conspired to make a most agreeable picture, and to fill a heart that sympathises at human happiness with an expressible serenity.

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The expected time for the play to begin at last arrived; the curtain was drawn, and the actors came on. A woman, who personated a queen, came in curtseying to the audience, who clapped their hands upon her appearance. Clapping of hands is, it seems, the manner of applauding in England; the manner is absurd, but every country, you know, has its peculiar absurdities. I was equally surprised, however, at the submission of the actress, who should have considered herself as a queen, as at the little discernment of the audience, who gave her such marks of applause before she attempted to deserve them. Preliminaries between her and the audience being thus adjusted, the dialogue was supported between her and a most hopeful youth, who acted the part of her confidant. They both appeared in extreme distress, for it seems the queen had lost a child some fifteen years before, and still kept its dear resemblance next her heart, while her kind companion bore a part in her sorrows.

Her lamentations grew loud; comfort is offered, but she detests the very sound: she bids them preach comfort to the winds. Upon this her husband comes in, who, seeing the queen so much afflicted, can himself hardly refrain from tears, or avoid partaking in the soft distress. After thus grieving through three scenes, the curtain dropped for the first act.

"Truly," said I to my companion, "these kings and queens are very much disturbed at no very great

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misfortune: certain I am, were people of humbler stations to act in this manner they would be thought divested of common sense." I had scarce finished this observation when the curtain rose, and the king came on in a violent passion. His wife had, it seems, refused his proffered tenderness, had spurned his royal embrace; and he seemed resolved not to survive her fierce disdain. After he had thus fretted, and the queen had fretted through the second act, the curtain was let down once more.

"Now," says my companion, "you perceive the king to be a man of spirit; he feels at every pore: one of your phlegmatic sons of clay would have given the queen her own way, and let her come to herself by degrees; but the king is for immediate tenderness, or instant death: death and tenderness are leading passions of every modern buskined hero, this moment they embrace and the next stab, mixing daggers and kisses in every period."

I was going to second his remarks, when my attention was engrossed by a new object; a man came in balancing a straw upon his nose, and the audience were clapping their hands in all the raptures of applause. "To what purpose," cried I, "does this unmeaning figure make his appearance? is he a part of the plot?" "Unmeaning do you call him?" replied my friend in black; "this is one of the most important characters of the whole play; nothing pleases the people more than seeing a straw balanced: there is a great deal of meaning

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in the straw; there is something suited to every apprehension in the sight; and a fellow possessed of talents like these is sure of making his fortune."[1]

The third act now began with an actor who came to inform us that he was the villain of the play, and intended to show strange things before all was over. He was joined by another, who seemed as much disposed for mischief as he; their intrigues continued through this whole division. "If that be a villain," said I, "he must be a very stupid one to tell his secrets without being asked; such soliloquies of late are never admitted in China."

The noise of clapping interrupted me once more; a child of six years old was learning to dance on the stage, which gave the ladies and mandarins infinite satisfaction. "I am sorry," said I, "to see the pretty creature so early learning so bad a trade; dancing, being, I presume, as contemptible here as it is in China." "Quite the reverse," interrupted my companion; "dancing is a very reputable and genteel employment here; men have a greater chance for encouragement from the merit of their heels than their heads. One who jumps up and flourishes his toes three times before he comes to the ground may have three hundred a year; he who

[1] The exhibitions of Mattocks, the celebrated balance-master, were at this time much run after. Among other tricks, he would balance a straw with great adroitness, sometimes on one hand and sometimes on the other; and now and then he would kick it with his foot to a considerable height and catch it upon his nose, his chin, or his forehead.

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flourishes them four times gets four hundred; but he who arrives at five is inestimable, and may demand what salary he thinks proper. The female dancers, too, are valued for this sort of jumping and crossing; and it is a cant word among them that she deserves most who shows highest. But the fourth act is begun, let us be attentive."

In the fourth act the queen finds her long-lost child, now grown up into a youth of smart parts and great qualifications; wherefore, she wisely considers that the crown will fit his head better than that of her husband, whom she knows to be a driveller. The king discovers her design, and here comes on the deep distress: he loves the queen, and he loves the kingdom; he resolves therefore, in order to possess both, that her son must die. The queen exclaims at his barbarity, is frantic with rage, and at length, overcome with sorrow, falls into a fit; upon which the curtain drops and the act is concluded.

"Observe the art of the poet," cries my companion. "When the queen can say no more, she falls into a fit. While thus her eyes are shut, while she is supported in the arms of Abigail, what horrors do we not fancy! We feel it in every nerve; take my word for it, that fits are the true aposiopesis of modern tragedy."

The fifth act began, and a busy piece it was—scenes shifting, trumpets sounding, mobs hallooing, carpets spreading, guards bustling from one door to another; gods, demons, daggers, racks, and rats-

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[illegible] three [illegible] times get four hundred [illegible] [illegible] is inestimable, and [illegible] [illegible] he thinks proper. The [illegible] [illegible] valued for this sort of jumping [illegible] [illegible] is a cant word among [illegible] [illegible] serves most who shows highest. But [illegible] is [illegible] be attentive."

In the [illegible] finds her long-lost [illegible] grown up [illegible] youth of smart parts [illegible] great [illegible] therefore, she wisely considers that the crown will fit his head better than that of her husband, whom she knows to be a [illegible] The [illegible] her design, and [illegible] [illegible] he loves the queen, and he loves the [illegible] he resolves therefore, in order to [illegible] her son must die. The queen exclaims [illegible] barbarity, is frantic with [illegible], and at length overcome with sorrow, falls into a fit; upon which the curtain drops and the act is concluded.

"Observe the art of the poet," cries my companion. "When the queen can say no more, she falls into a fit. While thus her eyes are shut, while [illegible] supported in the arms of Abigail, what horrors [illegible] not fancy! We feel it in every nerve; take [illegible] for it, that fits are the true aposiopesis of [illegible] tragedy."

[illegible] act began, and a busy piece it was — [illegible], trumpets sounding, mobs hallooing, [illegible], guards bustling from one door [illegible], demons, daggers, racks, and rats-

Mixing with the crowd, my companion and I got into the street.

Letter [illegible]. Citizen of the World.

From the drawing by Frederick Simpson Coburn.

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bane. But whether the king was killed, or the queen was drowned, or the son was poisoned, I have absolutely forgotten.

When the play was over, I could not help observing that the persons of the drama appeared in as much distress in the first act as the last. How is it possible, said I, to sympathise with them through five long acts! Pity is but a short-lived passion; I hate to hear an actor mouthing trifles; neither startings, strainings, nor attitudes affect me, unless there be cause: after I have been once or twice deceived by those unmeaning alarms, my heart sleeps in peace, probably unaffected by the principal distress. There should be one great passion aimed at by the actor as well as the poet; all the rest should be subordinate, and only contribute to make that the greater: if the actor, therefore, exclaims upon every occasion in the tones of despair, he attempts to move us too soon; he anticipates the blow, he ceases to affect, though he gains our applause.

I scarce perceived that the audience were almost all departed, wherefore, mixing with the crowd, my companion and I got into the street; where, essaying an hundred obstacles from coach-wheels and palanquin poles, like birds in their flight through the branches of a forest, after various turnings we both at length got home in safety. Adieu.

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LETTER XXII

THE CHINESE PHILOSOPHER'S SON MADE A SLAVE IN PERSIA

From the Same

THE letter which came by the way of Smyrna, and which you sent me unopened, was from my son. As I have permitted you to take copies of all those I sent to China, you might have made no ceremony in opening those directed to me. Either in joy or sorrow, my friend should participate in my feelings. It would give pleasure to see a good man pleased at my success; it would give almost equal pleasure to see him sympathise at my disappointment.

Every account I receive from the East seems to come loaded with some new affliction. My wife and daughter were taken from me, and yet I sustained the loss with intrepidity; my son is made a slave among barbarians, which was the only blow that could have reached my heart: yes, I will indulge the transports of nature for a little, in order to show that I can overcome them in the end.

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True magnanimity consists not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.

When our mighty emperor had published his displeasure at my departure, and seized upon all that was mine, my son was privately secreted from his resentment. Under the protection and guardianship of Fum Hoam, the best and the wisest of all the inhabitants of China, he was for some time instructed in the learning of the missionaries, and the wisdom of the East. But hearing of my adventures, and incited by filial piety, he was resolved to follow my fortunes, and share my distress.

He passed the confines of China in disguise, hired himself as a camel-driver to a caravan that was crossing the deserts of Thibet, and was within one day's journey of the river Laur, which divides that country from India, when a body of wandering Tartars, falling unexpectedly upon the caravan, plundered it, and made those who escaped their first fury slaves. By those he was led into the extensive and desolate regions that border on the shores of the Aral Lake.

Here he lived by hunting, and was obliged to supply every day a certain proportion of the spoil to regale his savage masters. His learning, his virtues, and even his beauty, were qualifications that no way served to recommend him; they knew no merit but that of providing large quantities of milk and raw flesh; and were sensible of no happiness but that of rioting on the undressed meal.

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Some merchants from Mesched, however, coming to trade with the Tartars for slaves, he was sold among the number, and led into the kingdom of Persia, where he is now detained. He is there obliged to watch the looks of a voluptuous and cruel master, a man fond of pleasure yet incapable of refinement, whom many years' service in war has taught pride but not bravery.

That treasure which I still keep within my bosom, my child, my all that was left to me, is now a slave.[1] Good heavens, why was this? Why have I been introduced into this mortal apartment, to be a spectator of my own misfortunes and the misfortunes of my fellow-creatures? Wherever I turn, what a labyrinth of doubt, error, and disappointment appears! Why was I brought into being; for what purposes made; from whence have I come; whither strayed; or to what regions am I hastening? Reason cannot resolve. It lends a a ray to show the horrors of my prison, but not a light to guide me to escape them. Ye boasted revelations of the earth, how little do you aid the inquiry!

How am I surprised at the inconsistency of the magi! their principles of good and evil affright me. The Indian who bathes his visage in urine and calls it piety strikes me with astonishment. The Christian who believes in three gods is highly absurd. The Jews who pretend that Deity is

[1] This whole apostrophe seems most literally translated from Ambulaaohamed, the Arabian poet.—GOLDSMITH.

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pleased with the effusion of blood are not less displeasing. I am equally surprised that rational beings can come from the extremities of the earth in order to kiss a stone,[1] and yet all pretend to teach me to be happy.

Surely all men are blind and ignorant of truth. Mankind wanders unknowing his way, from morning till evening. Where shall we turn after happiness; or is it wisest to desist from the pursuit? Like reptiles in a corner of some stupendous palace, we peep from our holes, look about us, wonder at all we see, but are ignorant of the great Architect's design. O for a revelation of Himself, for a plan of His universal system! O for the reasons of our creation; or why were we created to be thus unhappy! If we are to experience no other felicity but what this life affords, then are we miserable indeed: if we are born only to look about us,[2] repine, and die, then has Heaven been guilty of injustice. If this life terminates my existence, I despise the blessings of Providence, and the wisdom of the giver; if this life be my all, let the following epitaph be written on the tomb of Altangi: "By my father's crimes I received this; by my own crimes I bequeath it to posterity!"

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[1] The Black Stone at Mecca, which, according to tradition, fell from heaven during the life of Adam, and was restored to Paradise at the time of the deluge, but was brought to Abraham at the building of the Caaba.

[2] "Let us, since life can little more supply
Than just to look about us and to die," etc.
POPE, *Essay on Man.*

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CHAPTER XXIII

THE ENGLISH SUBSCRIPTION IN FAVOUR OF THE FRENCH PRISONERS COMMENDED

To the Same

YET, while I sometimes lament the cause of humanity, and the depravity of human nature, there now and then appear gleams of greatness that serve to relieve the eye, oppressed with the hideous prospect, and resemble those cultivated spots that are sometimes found in the midst of an Asiatic wilderness. I see many superior excellencies among the English, which it is not in the power of all their follies to hide; I see virtues which in other countries are known only to a few practised here by every rank of people.

I know not whether it proceeds from their superior opulence that the English are more charitable than the rest of mankind; whether by being possessed of all the conveniences of life themselves they have more leisure to perceive the uneasy situation of the distressed; whatever be the motive, they are not only the most charitable of any other

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nation, but most judicious in distinguishing the properest objects of compassion.

In other countries, the giver is generally influenced by the immediate impulse of pity; his generosity is exerted as much to relieve his own uneasy sensations as to comfort the object in distress. In England, benefactions are of a more general nature. Some men of fortune and universal benevolence propose the proper objects; the wants and the merits of the petitioners are canvassed by the people; neither passion nor pity find a place in the cool discussion; and charity is then only exerted when it has received the approbation of reason.

A late instance of this finely directed benevolence forces itself so strongly on my imagination that it in a manner reconciles me to pleasure, and once more makes me the universal friend of man. The English and the French have not only political reasons to induce them to mutual hatred, but often the more prevailing motive of private interest to widen the breach. A war between other countries is carried on collectively; army fights against army, and a man's own private resentment is lost in that of the community; but in England and France the individuals of each country plunder each other at sea without redress, and consequently feel that animosity against each other which passengers do at a robber. They have for some time carried on an expensive war, and several captives have been taken on both sides: those made prisoners by the French have been used

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with cruelty, and guarded with unnecessary caution; those taken by the English, being much more numerous, were confined in the ordinary manner, and, not being released by their countrymen, began to feel all these inconveniences which arise from want of covering and long confinement.

Their countrymen were informed of their deplorable situation; but they, more intent upon annoying their enemies than relieving their friends, refused the least assistance. The English now saw thousands of their fellow-creatures starving in every prison, forsaken by those whose duty it was to protect them, labouring with disease, and without clothes to keep off the severity of the season. National benevolence prevailed over national animosity; their prisoners were indeed enemies, but they were enemies in distress; they ceased to be hateful when they no longer continued to be formidable; forgetting, therefore, their national hatred, the men who were brave enough to conquer were generous enough to forgive; and they whom all the world seemed to have disclaimed, at last found pity and redress from those they attempted to subdue. A subscription was opened, ample charities collected, proper necessaries procured, and the poor gay sons of a merry nation were once more taught to resume their former gaiety.[1]

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[1] "Gay, sprightly land of mirth and social ease,
Pleas'd with thyself, whom all the world can please."
The Traveller.

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When I cast my eye over the list of those who contributed on this occasion, I find the names almost entirely English; scarce one foreigner appears among the number. It was for Englishmen alone to be capable of such exalted virtue. I own I cannot look over this catalogue of good men and philosophers without thinking better of myself, because it makes me entertain a more favourable opinion of mankind. I am particularly struck with one who writes these words upon the paper that enclosed his benefaction: "The mite of an Englishman, a Citizen of the World, to Frenchmen, prisoners of war, and naked." I only wish that he may find as much pleasure from his virtues as I have done in reflecting upon them; that alone will amply reward him. Such a one, my friend, is an honour to human nature; he makes no private distinctions of party; all that are stamped with the divine image of their Creator are friends to him; he is a native of the world; and the emperor of China may be proud that he has such a countryman.

To rejoice in the destruction of our enemies is a foible grafted upon human nature, and we must be permitted to indulge it: the true way of atoning for such an ill-founded pleasure is thus to turn our triumph into an act of benevolence, and to testfy our own joy by endeavouring to banish anxiety from others.

Hamti, the best and wisest emperor that ever filled the throne, after having gained three signal

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victories over the Tartars, who had invaded his dominions, returned to Nankin in order to enjoy the glory of his conquest. After he had rested for some days, the people, who are naturally fond of processions, impatiently expected the triumphal entry which emperors upon such occasions were accustomed to make: their murmurs came to the emperor's ears; he loved his people, and was willing to do all in his power to satisfy their just desires; he therefore assured them that he intended, upon the next Feast of the Lanterns,[1] to exhibit one of the most glorious triumphs that had ever been seen in China.

The people were in raptures at his condescension; and, on the appointed day, assembled at the gates of the palace with the most eager expectations. Here they waited for some time without seeing any of those preparations which usually precede a pageant. The lantern with ten thousand tapers was not yet brought forth; the fireworks, which usually covered the city-walls, were not yet lighted; the people once more began to murmur at this delay; when, in the midst of their impatience, the palace gates flew open, and the emperor

[1] "The first full moon of the new year is the Feast of Lanterns, being a display of ingenuity and taste in the construction and mechanism of an infinite variety of lanterns made of silk, varnish, horn, paper, and glass; some of them supplied with moving figures of men galloping on horseback, fighting, or performing various feats, together with numerous representations of beasts, birds, and other living creatures, the whole in full motion."—DAVIS's *Chinese*, vol. i., p. 306.

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himself appeared; not in splendour or magnificence, but in an ordinary habit, followed by the blind, the maimed, and the strangers of the city, all in new clothes, and each carrying in his hand money enough to supply his necessities for the year. The people were at first amazed, but soon perceived the wisdom of their king, who taught them that to make one man happy was more truly great than having ten thousand captives groaning at the wheels of his chariot. Adieu.

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LETTER XXIV

THE VENDERS OF QUACK MEDICINES AND NOSTRUMS RIDICULED

To the Same

WHATEVER may be the merits of the English in other sciences, they seem peculiarly excellent in the art of healing. There is scarcely a disorder incident to humanity, against which they are not possessed with a most infallible antidote. The professors of other arts confess the inevitable intricacy of things, talk with doubt, and decide with hesitation; but doubting is entirely unknown in medicine; the advertising professors here delight in cases of difficulty: be the disorder never so desperate or radical, you will find numbers in every street who, by levelling a pill at the part affected, promise a certain cure, without loss of time, knowledge of a bed-fellow, or hindrance of business.

When I consider the assiduity of this profession, their benevolence amazes me. They not only in

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general give their medicines for half value, but use the most persuasive remonstrances to induce the sick to come and be cured. Sure there must be something strangely obstinate in an English patient, who refuses so much help upon such easy terms. Does he take a pride in being bloated with a dropsy? does he find pleasure in the alternations of an intermittent fever? or feel as much satisfaction in nursing up his gout as he found pleasure in acquiring it? He must; otherwise he would never reject such repeated assurances of instant relief. What can be more convincing than the manner in which the sick are invited to be well? The doctor first begs the most earnest attention of the public to what he is going to propose; he solemnly affirms the pill was never found to want success; he produces a list of those who have been rescued from the grave by taking it. Yet, notwithstanding all this, there are many here who, now and then, think proper to be sick? Only sick did I say? There are some who even think proper to die! Yes, by the head of Confucius! they die; though they might have purchased the health-restoring specific for half-a-crown at every corner.

I am amazed, my dear Fum Hoam, that these doctors, who know what an obstinate set of people they have to deal with, have never thought of attempting to revive the dead. When the living are found to reject their prescriptions, they ought in conscience to apply to the dead, from whom

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they can expect no such mortifying repulses: they would find in the dead the most complying patients imaginable; and what gratitude might they not expect from the patient's son, now no longer an heir, and his wife, now no longer a widow.

Think not, my friend, that there is anything chimerical in such an attempt; they already perform cures equally strange. What can be more truly astonishing than to see old age restored to youth, and vigour to the most feeble constitutions? Yet this is performed here every day: a simple electuary effects these wonders, even without the bungling ceremonies of having the patient boiled up in a kettle, or ground down in a mill.

Few physicians here go through the ordinary courses of education, but receive all their knowledge of medicine by immediate inspiration from Heaven. Some are thus inspired even in the womb; and, what is very remarkable, understand their profession as well at three years old as at three score. Others have spent a great part of their lives unconscious of any latent excellence, till a bankruptcy, or a residence in gaol, have called their miraculous powers into exertion. And others still there are indebted to their superlative ignorance alone for success: the more ignorant the practitioner, the less capable is he thought of deceiving. The people here judge as they do in the East; where it is thought absolutely requisite that a man

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"He solemnly affirms the pill was never known to want success."

Letter XXIV. Citizen of the World.

From the drawing by Frederick Simpson Coburn.

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should be an idiot before he pretend to be either a conjuror or a doctor.[1]

When a physician-by-inspiration is sent for, he never perplexes the patient by previous examination; he asks very few questions, and those only for form's sake. He knows every disorder by intuition; he administers the pill or drop for every distemper; nor is more inquisitive than the farrier while he drenches an horse. If the patient lives, then has he one more to add to the surviving list; if he dies, then it may be justly said of the patient's disorder that, "as it was not cured, the disorder was incurable."[2]

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[1] In China the medical profession is at a low ebb. They are utterly ignorant of anatomy, and never think of attempting bloodletting, amputation, or any considerable operation. The eunuchs about the palace are generally accounted the most eminent practitioners; but the great proportion of acting physicians are to be found among the lower classes of the community, and the multitude of quacks and nostrum venders is immense.—See BARROW, p. 341.

[2] "When a physician has been unsuccessful, he retires with the common Chinese adage, 'that there is medicine for sickness, but none for fate.'"—DAVIS's *Chinese*, ii., p. 282.

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LETTER XXV

THE NATURAL RISE AND DECLINE OF KINGDOMS EXEMPLIFIED IN THE HISTORY OF THE KINGDOM OF LAO

From the Same

I WAS some days ago in company with a politician, who very pathetically declaimed upon the miserable situation of his country. He assured me that the whole political machine was moving in a wrong track, and that scarce even abilities like his own could ever set it right again. "What have we," said he, "to do with the wars on the continent? We are a commercial nation; we have only to cultivate commerce, like our neighbours the Dutch; it is our business to increase trade by settling new colonies; riches are the strength of a nation; and for the rest, our ships, our ships alone, will protect us." I found it vain to oppose my feeble arguments to those of a man who thought himself wise enough to direct even the ministry. I fancied, however, that I saw with more certainty, because I reasoned without prejudice. I therefore begged leave, instead of

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argument, to relate a short history. He gave me a smile at once of condescension and contempt, and I proceeded, as follows, to describe the rise and decline of the kingdom of Lao.

Northward of China, and in one of the doublings of the great wall, the fruitful province of Lao enjoyed its liberty, and a peculiar government of its own. As the inhabitants were on all sides surrounded by the wall, they feared no sudden invasion from the Tartars; and being each possessed of property, they were zealous in its defence.

The natural consequence of security and affluence in any country is a love of pleasure: when the wants of nature are supplied, we seek after the conveniences; when possessed of these we desire the luxuries of life; and when every luxury is provided, it is then ambition takes up the man and leaves him still something to wish for. The inhabitants of the country, from primitive simplicity, soon began to aim at elegance, and from elegance proceeded to refinement. It was now found absolutely requisite, for the good of the state, that the people should be divided. Formerly, the same hand that was employed in tilling the ground, or in dressing up the manufactures, was also in time of need a soldier; but the custom was now changed: for it was perceived that a man bred up from childhood to the arts either of peace or of war became more eminent by this means in his respective profession. The inhabitants were, therefore, now

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distinguished into artisans and soldiers; and while those improved the luxuries of life, these watched for the security of the people.

A country possessed of freedom has always two sorts of enemies to fear: foreign foes who attack its existence from without, and internal miscreants who betray its liberties within. The inhabitants of Lao were to guard against both. A country of artisans were most likely to preserve internal liberty, and a nation of soldiers were fittest to repel a foreign invasion. Hence naturally arose a division of opinion between the artisans and the soldiers of the kingdom. The artisans, ever complaining that freedom was threatened by armed internal force, were for disbanding the soldiers, and insisted that their walls, alone, were sufficient to repel the most formidable invasion; the warriors, on the contrary, represented the power of the neighbouring kings, the combinations formed against their state, and the weakness of the wall, which every earthquake might overturn. While this altercation continued, the kingdom might be justly said to enjoy its greatest share of vigour: every order in the state, by being watchful over each other, contributed to diffuse happiness equally, and balanced the state. The arts of peace flourished, nor were those of war neglected; the neighbouring powers, who had nothing to apprehend from the ambition of men whom they only saw solicitous not for riches but freedom, were contented to traffic with them; they sent

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their goods to be manufactured in Lao, and paid a large price for them upon their return.

By these means, this people at length became moderately rich, and their opulence naturally invited the invader: a Tartar prince led an immense army against them, and they as bravely stood up in their own defence; they were still inspired with a love of their country; they fought the barbarous enemy with fortitude, and gained a complete victory.

From this moment, which they regarded as the completion of their glory, historians date their downfall. They had risen in strength by a love of their country, and fell by indulging ambition. The country possessed by the invading Tartars seemed to them a prize that would not only render them more formidable for the future, but which would increase their opulence for the present; it was unanimously resolved, therefore, both by soldiers and artisans, that those desolate regions should be peopled by colonies from Lao. When a trading nation begins to act the conqueror, it is then perfectly undone: it subsists in some measure by the support of its neighbours; while they continue to regard it without envy or apprehension, trade may flourish; but when it once presumes to assert as its right what it only enjoyed as a favour, each country reclaims that part of commerce which it has power to take back, and turns it into some other channel, more honourable though perhaps less convenient.

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Every neighbour now began to regard with jealous eyes this ambitious commonwealth, and forbade their subjects any future intercourse with them. The inhabitants of Lao, however, still pursued the same ambitious maxims: it was from their colonies alone they expected riches; and riches, said they, are strength, and strength is security. Numberless were the migrations of the desperate and enterprising of this country, to people the desolate dominions lately possessed by the Tartar. Between these colonies and the mother country a very advantageous traffic was at first carried on; the republic sent their colonies large quantities of the manufactures of the country, and they in return provided the republic with an equivalent in ivory and ginseng. By this means the inhabitants became immensely rich, and this produced an equal degree of voluptuousness; for men who have much money will always find some fantastical modes of enjoyment. How shall I mark the steps by which they declined? Every colony in process of time spreads over the whole country where it first was planted. As it grows more populous, it becomes more polite; and those manufactures for which it was in the beginning obliged to others, it learns to dress up itself. Such was the case with the colonies of Lao; they in less than a century became a powerful and a polite people, and the more polite they grew, the less advantageous was the commerce which still subsisted between them and others.

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By this means the mother-country, being abridged in its commerce, grew poorer, but not less luxurious. Their former wealth had introduced luxury; and wherever luxury once fixes, no art can either lessen or remove it. Their commerce with their neighbours was totally destroyed, and that with their colonies was every day naturally and necessarily declining; they still, however, preserved the insolence of wealth, without a power to support it, and persevered in being luxurious, while contemptible from poverty. In short, the state resembled one of those bodies bloated with disease, whose bulk is only a symptom of its wretchedness.

Their former opulence only rendered them more impotent, as those individuals who are reduced from riches to poverty are of all men the most unfortunate and helpless. They had imagined, because their colonies tended to make them rich upon the first acquisition, they would still continue to do so; they now found, however, that on themselves alone they should have depended for support; that colonies ever afford but temporary affluence, and when cultivated and polite are no longer useful. From such a concurrence of circumstances they soon became contemptible. The emperor Honti invaded them with a powerful army. Historians do not say whether their colonies were too remote to lend assistance, or else were desirous of shaking off their dependence; but certain it is, they scarce made

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any resistance: their walls were now found but a weak defence, and they at length were obliged to acknowledge subjection to the empire of China.

Happy, very happy, might they have been had they known when to bound their riches and their glory; had they known that extending empire is often diminishing power;[1] that countries are ever strongest which are internally powerful; that colonies, by draining away the brave and enterprising, leave the country in the hands of the timid and the avaricious; that walls give little protection, unless manned with resolution; that too much commerce may injure a nation as well as too little; and that there is a wide difference between a conquering and a flourishing empire.[2] Adieu.

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[1] "Extended empire, like expanded gold,
Exchanges solid strength for feeble splendour."
JOHNSON'S *Irene*.

[2] "Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen who survey
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,
'T is yours to judge how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and a happy land."
The Deserted Village.

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LETTER XXVI

THE CHARACTER OF THE MAN IN BLACK, WITH SOME INSTANCES OF HIS INCONSISTENT CONDUCT

From the Same

THOUGH fond of many acquaintances, I desire an intimacy only with a few. The Man in Black whom I have often mentioned is one whose friendship I could wish to acquire, because he possesses my esteem. His manners, it is true, are tinctured with some strange inconsistencies, and he may be justly termed an humourist in a nation of humourists. Though he is generous even to profusion, he affects to be thought a prodigy of parsimony and prudence; though his conversation be replete with the most sordid and selfish maxims, his heart is dilated with the most unbounded love. I have known him profess himself a man-hater, while his cheek was glowing with compassion, and while his looks were softened into pity I have heard him use the language of the most unbounded ill-nature. Some affect humanity and

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tenderness, others boast of having such dispositions from nature; but he is the only man I ever knew who seemed ashamed of his natural benevolence. He takes as much pains to hide his feelings as any hypocrite would to conceal his indifference; but on every unguarded moment the mask drops off, and reveals him to the most superficial observer.[1]

In one of our late excursions into the country, happening to discourse upon the provision that was made for the poor in England, he seemed amazed how any of his countrymen could be so foolishly weak as to relieve occasional objects of charity, when the laws had made such ample provision for their support. "In every parish-house," says he, "the poor are supplied with food, clothes, fire, and a bed to lie on; they want no more, I desire no more myself; yet still they seem discontented. I am surprised at the inactivity of our magistrates, in not taking up such vagrants, who are only a weight upon the industrious: I am surprised that the people are found to relieve them, when they must be at the same time sensible that it in some measure encourages idleness, extravagance, and imposture. Were I to advise any man for whom I had the least regard, I would

[1] "I have often affected bluntness to avoid the imputation of flattery, and have frequently seemed to overlook those merits too obvious to escape notice, and pretended disregard to those instances of good-nature and good sense which I could not fail tacitly to applaud; and all this, lest I should be ranked amongst the grinning tribe, who say 'Very well' to all that is said," etc.—*Goldsmith to Mrs Jane Lawder*, August 15, 1758.

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caution him by all means not to be imposed upon by their false pretences: let me assure you, Sir, they are impostors, every one of them, and rather merit a prison than relief."

He was proceeding in this strain earnestly to dissuade me from an imprudence of which I am seldom guilty, when an old man, who still had about him the remnants of tattered finery, implored our compassion. He assured us that he was no common beggar, but forced into this shameful profession to support a dying wife and five hungry children. Being prepossessed against such falsehoods, this story had not the least influence upon me; but it was quite otherwise with the Man in Black. I could see it visibly operate upon his countenance, and effectually interrupt his harangue. I could easily perceive that his heart burned to relieve the five starving children, but he seemed ashamed to discover his weakness to me. While he thus hesitated between compassion and pride, I pretended to look another way, and he seized this opportunity of giving the poor petitioner a piece of silver, bidding him at the same time, in order that I should hear, go work for his bread, and not tease passengers with such impertinent falsehoods for the future.

As he had fancied himself quite unperceived, he continued, as we proceeded, to rail against beggars with as much animosity as before: he threw in some episodes on his own amazing prudence and economy, with his profound skill in dis-

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covering impostors; he explained the manner in which he would deal with beggars, were he a magistrate; hinted at enlarging some of the prisons for their reception, and told two stories of ladies that were robbed by beggarmen. He was beginning a third to the same purpose, when a sailor with a wooden leg once more crossed our walks, desiring our pity and blessing our limbs. I was for going on without taking any notice, but my friend looking wishfully upon the poor petitioner, bid me stop, and he would show me with how much ease he could at any time detect an impostor.

He now, therefore, assumed a look of importance, and in an angry tone began to examine the sailor, demanding in what engagement he was thus disabled and rendered unfit for service. The sailor replied, in a tone as angrily as he, that he had been an officer on board a private ship of war, and that he had lost his leg aboard, in defence of those who did nothing at home. At this reply all my friend's importance vanished in a moment; he had not a single question more to ask: he now only studied what method he should take to relieve him unobserved. He had, however, no part to act, as he was obliged to preserve the appearance of ill-nature before me, and yet relieve himself by relieving the sailor. Casting, therefore, a furious look upon some bundles of chips which the fellow carried in a string at his back, my friend demanded how he sold his matches; but, not waiting for a reply, desired in a surly tone to have

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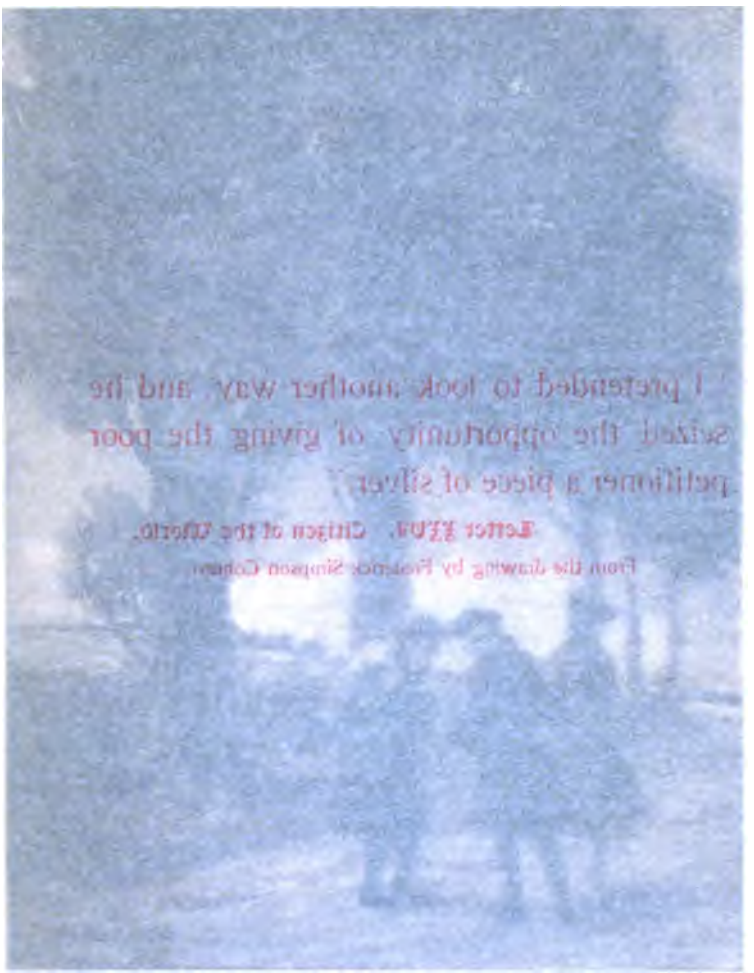

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"I pretended to look another way, and he seized the opportunity of giving the poor petitioner a piece of silver."

Letter XXVI: Citizen of the World

From the drawing by Frederick Simpson Coburn.

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a shilling's worth. The sailor seemed at first surprised at his demand, but soon recollecting himself, and presenting his whole bundle, "Here, master," says he, "take all my cargo, and a blessing into the bargain."

It is impossible to describe with what an air of triumph my friend marched off with his new purchase; he assured me that he was firmly of opinion that those fellows must have stolen their goods who could thus afford to sell them for half value. He informed me of several different uses to which those chips might be applied; he expatiated largely upon the savings that would result from lighting candles with a match, instead of thrusting them into the fire. He averred that he would as soon have parted with a tooth as his money to those vagabonds, unless for some valuable consideration. I cannot tell how long this panegyric upon frugality and matches might have continued, had not his attention been called off by another object more distressful than either of the former. A woman in rags, with one child in her arms, and another on her back, was attempting to sing ballads, but with such a mournful voice that it was difficult to determine whether she was singing or crying. A wretch, who in the deepest distress still aimed at good-humour, was an object my friend was by no means capable of withstanding: his vivacity and his discourse were instantly interrupted; upon this occasion his very dissimulation had forsaken him. Even in my presence

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he immediately applied his hands to his pockets, in order to relieve her; but guess his confusion when he found he had already given away all the money he carried about him to former objects. The misery painted in the woman's visage was not half so strongly expressed as the agony in his. He continued to search for some time, but to no purpose, till, at length recollecting himself, with a face of ineffable good-nature, as he had no money, he put into her hands his shilling's worth of matches.

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LETTER XXVII

THE HISTORY OF THE MAN IN BLACK

To the Same

AS there appeared something reluctantly good in the character of my companion, I must own it surprised me what could be his motives for thus concealing virtues which others take such pains to display. I was unable to repress my desire of knowing the history of a man who thus seemed to act under continual restraint, and whose benevolence was rather the effect of appetite than reason.

It was not, however, till after repeated solicitations he thought proper to gratify my curiosity. "If you are fond," says he, "of hearing hair-breadth 'scapes, my history must certainly please; for I have been for twenty years upon the very verge of starving, without ever being starved.

"My father, the younger son of a good family, was possessed of a small living in the Church.[1]

[1] In this story are contained portions of Goldsmith's own early history.

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His education was above his fortune, and his generosity greater than his education. Poor as he was, he had his flatterers still poorer than himself; for every dinner he gave them, they returned an equivalent in praise, and this was all he wanted. The same ambition that actuates a monarch at the head of an army influenced my father at the head of his table; he told the story of the ivy-tree, and that was laughed at; he repeated the jest of the two scholars and one pair of breeches, and the company laughed at that; but the story of Taffy in the sedan chair was sure to set the table in a roar: thus his pleasure increased in proportion to the pleasure he gave; he loved all the world, and he fancied all the world loved him.

"As his fortune was but small, he lived up to the very extent of it: he had no intentions of leaving his children money, for that was dross; he was resolved they should have learning, for learning, he used to observe, was better than silver or gold. For this purpose, he undertook to instruct us himself; and took as much pains to form our morals as to improve our understanding. We were told that universal benevolence was what first cemented society; we were taught to consider all the wants of mankind as our own; to regard 'the human face divine' with affection and esteem; he wound us up to be mere machines of pity, and rendered us incapable of withstanding the slightest impulse made either by real or fictitious distress; in a word, we were perfectly instructed in the art

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of giving away thousands before we were taught the more necessary qualifications of getting a farthing.

"I cannot avoid imagining that thus refined by his lessons out of all my suspicion, and divested of even all the little cunning which nature had given me, I resembled, upon my first entrance into the busy and insidious world, one of those gladiators who were exposed without armour in the amphitheatre at Rome. My father, however, who had only seen the world on one side, seemed to triumph in my superior discernment; though my whole stock of wisdom consisted in being able to talk like himself upon subjects that once were useful, because they were then topics of the busy world, but that now were utterly useless, because connected with the busy world no longer.

"The first opportunity he had of finding his expectations disappointed was at the very middling figure I made in the university: he had flattered himself that he should soon see me rising into the foremost rank in literary reputation, but was mortified to find me utterly unnoticed and unknown. His disappointment might have been partly ascribed to his having overrated my talents, and partly to my dislike of mathematical reasonings, at a time when my imagination and memory, yet unsatisfied, were more eager after new objects than desirous of reasoning upon those I knew. This did not, however, please my tutors, who observed, indeed, that I was a little dull; but at

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the same time allowed that I seemed to be very good-natured, and had no harm in me.[1]

"After I had resided at college seven years my father died, and left me—his blessing. Thus shoved from shore, without ill-nature to protect, or cunning to guide, or proper stores to subsist me in so dangerous a voyage, I was obliged to embark in the wide world at twenty-two. But, in order to settle in life, my friends advised (for they always advise when they begin to despise us), they advised me, I say, to go into orders.

"To be obliged to wear a long wig when I liked a short one, or a black coat when I generally dressed in brown, I thought was such a restraint upon my liberty that I absolutely rejected the proposal. A priest in England is not the same mortified creature with a bonze in China; with us, not he that fasts best, but eats best, is reckoned the best liver; yet I rejected a life of luxury, indolence, and ease, from no other consideration but that boyish one of dress. So that my friends were now perfectly satisfied I was undone; and yet they thought it a pity for one who had not the least harm in him, and was so very good-natured.

"Poverty naturally begets dependence, and I was admitted as flatterer to a great man. At first I was surprised that the situation of a flatterer at a great man's table could be thought disagreeable;

[1] "Who can possibly doubt the original from whom the man in black's experiences were taken?"—FORSTER'S *Life of Goldsmith*, vol. i., p. 35.

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there was no great trouble in listening attentively when his lordship spoke and laughing when he looked round for applause. This even good manners might have obliged me to perform. I found however, too soon, that his lordship was a greater dunce than myself; and from that very moment my power of flattery was at an end. I now rather aimed at setting him right than at receiving his absurdities with submission: to flatter those we do not know is an easy task; but to flatter our intimate acquaintances, all whose foibles are strongly in our eye, is drudgery insupportable. Every time I now opened my lips in praise my falsehood went to my conscience; his lordship soon perceived me to be unfit for service; I was therefore discharged; my patron at the same time being graciously pleased to observe that he believed I was tolerably good-natured, and had not the least harm in me.

"Disappointed in ambition, I had recourse to love. A young lady, who lived with her aunt, and was possessed of a pretty fortune in her own disposal, had given me, as I fancied, some reasons to expect success. The symptoms by which I was guided were striking. She had always laughed with me at her awkward acquaintance, and at her aunt among the number; she always observed that a man of sense would make a better husband than a fool, and I as constantly applied the observation in my own favour. She continually talked, in my company, of friendship and the

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beauties of the mind, and spoke of Mr. Shrimp my rival's high-heeled shoes with detestation. These were circumstances which I thought strongly in my favour; so, after resolving, and re-resolving, I had courage enough to tell her my mind. Miss heard my proposal with serenity, seeming at the same time to study the figures of her fan. Out at last it came. There was but one small objection to complete our happiness; which was no more than—that she was married three months before to Mr. Shrimp, with high-heeled shoes! By way of consolation, however, she observed that, though I was disappointed in her, my addresses to her aunt would probably kindle her into sensibility; as the old lady always allowed me to be very good-natured, and not to have the least share of harm in me.

"Yet still I had friends, numerous friends, and to them I was resolved to apply. O friendship! thou fond soother of the human breast, to thee we fly in every calamity; to thee the wretched seek for succour; on thee the care-tired son of misery fondly relies; from thy kind assistance the unfortunate always hopes relief, and may be ever sure of—disappointment! My first application was to a city scrivener, who had frequently offered to lend me money when he knew I did not want it. I informed him that now was the time to put his friendship to the test; that I wanted to borrow a couple of hundreds for a certain occasion, and was resolved to take it up from him. 'And pray, Sir,'

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cried my friend, 'do you want all this money?' 'Indeed, I never wanted it more,' returned I. 'I am sorry for that,' cries the scrivener, 'with all my heart; for they who want money when they come to borrow, will always want money when they should come to pay.'

"From him I flew with indignation to one of the best friends I had in the world, and made the same request. 'Indeed, Mr. Drybone,' cries my friend, 'I always thought it would come to this. You know, Sir, I would not advise you but for your own good; but your conduct has hitherto been ridiculous in the highest degree, and some of your acquaintance always thought you a very silly fellow. Let me see, you want two hundred pounds. Do you want only two hundred, Sir, exactly?' 'To confess the truth,' returned I, 'I shall want three hundred; but then I have another friend from whom I can borrow the rest.' 'Why, then,' replied my friend, 'if you would take my advice (and you know I should not presume to advise you but for your own good), I would like to recommend it to you to borrow the whole sum from that other friend; and then one note will serve for all, you know.'

"Poverty now began to come fast upon me; yet, instead of growing more provident or cautious as I grew poor, I became every day more indolent and simple. A friend was arrested for fifty pounds; I was unable to extricate him except by becoming his bail. When at liberty he fled from his credi-

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tors, and left me to take his place. In prison I expected greater satisfactions than I had enjoyed at large. I hoped to converse with men in this new world, simple and believing like myself; but I found them as cunning and as cautious as those in the world I had left behind. They sponged up my money whilst it lasted, borrowed my coals, and never paid for them, and cheated me when I played at cribbage. All this was done because they believed me to be very good-natured, and knew that I had no harm in me.

"Upon my first entrance into this mansion, which is to some the abode of despair, I felt no sensations different from those I experienced abroad. I was now on one side of the door, and those who were unconfined were on the other: this was all the difference between us. At first, indeed, I felt some uneasiness, in considering how I should be able to provide this week for the wants of the week ensuing; but after some time, if I found myself sure of eating one day, I never troubled my head how I was to be supplied another. I seized every precarious meal with the utmost good-humour; indulged no rants of spleen at my situation; never called down heaven and all the stars to behold me dining upon a halfpenny-worth of radishes; my very companions were taught to believe that I liked salad better than mutton. I contented myself with thinking that all my life I should either eat white bread or brown; considered that all that happened was best; laughed

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when I was not in pain, took the world as it went, and read Tacitus often, for want of more books and company.

"How long I might have continued in this torpid state of simplicity I cannot tell, had I not been roused by seeing an old acquaintance, whom I knew to be a prudent blockhead, preferred to a place in the government. I now found that I had pursued a wrong track, and that the true way of being able to relieve others was first to aim at independence myself; my immediate care, therefore, was to leave my present habitation, and make an entire reformation in my conduct and behaviour. For a free, open, undesigning deportment, I put on that of closeness, prudence, and economy. One of the most heroic actions I ever performed, and for which I shall praise myself as long as I live, was the refusing half a crown to an old acquaintance, at the time when he wanted it, and I had it to spare: for this alone I deserve to be decreed an ovation.

"I now therefore pursued a course of uninterrupted frugality, seldom wanted a dinner, and was consequently invited to twenty. I soon began to get the character of a saving hunks that had money, and insensibly grew into esteem. Neighbours have asked my advice in the disposal of their daughters; and I have always taken care not to give any. I have contracted a friendship with an alderman, only by observing that if we take a farthing from a thousand pounds it will be a thousand pounds

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no longer. I have been invited to a pawnbroker's table by pretending to hate gravy; and am now actually upon treaty of marriage with a rich widow, for only having observed that the bread was rising. If ever I am asked a question, whether I know it or not, instead of answering, I only smile and look wise. If a charity is proposed, I go about with the hat, but put nothing in myself. If a wretch solicits my pity, I observe that the world is filled with impostors, and take a certain method of not being deceived, by never relieving. In short, I now find the truest way of finding esteem, even from the indigent, is—to give away nothing, and thus have much in our power to give."

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LETTER XXVIII

ON THE GREAT NUMBER OF OLD MAIDS AND BACHELORS IN LONDON—SOME OF THE CAUSES

To the Same

LATELY in company with my friend in black, whose conversation is now both my amusement and instruction, I could not avoid observing the great numbers of old bachelors and maiden ladies with which this city seems to be overrun. "Sure, marriage," said I, "is not sufficiently encouraged, or we should never behold such crowds of battered beaux and decayed coquettes still attempting to drive a trade they have been so long unfit for, and swarming upon the gaiety of the age. I behold an old bachelor in the most contemptible light, as an animal that lives upon the common stock without contributing his share: he is a beast of prey, and the laws should make use of as many stratagems, and as much force, to drive the reluctant savage into the toils as the Indians when they hunt the hyena or the rhinoceros. The mob should be permitted after him; boys might play tricks on him

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with impunity; every well-bred company should laugh at him; and if, when turned of sixty, he offered to make love, his mistress might spit in his face, or, what would be perhaps a greater punishment, should fairly grant him the favour.

"As for old maids," continued I, "they should not be treated with so much severity, because I suppose none would be so if they could. No lady in her senses would choose to make a subordinate figure at christenings and lyings-in, when she might be the principal herself; nor curry favour with a sister-in-law, when she might command an husband; nor toil in preparing custards, when she might lie abed and give directions how they ought to be made; nor stifle all her sensations in demure formality, when she might with matrimonial freedom shake her acquaintance by the hand and wink at a double-entendre. No lady could be so very silly as to live single, if she could help it. I consider an unmarried lady declining into the vale of years as one of those charming countries bordering on China, that lies waste for want of proper inhabitants. We are not to accuse the country, but the ignorance of its neighbours, who are insensible of its beauties, though at liberty to enter and cultivate the soil.

"Indeed, Sir," replied my companion, "you are very little acquainted with the English ladies, to think they are old maids against their will. I dare venture to affirm that you can hardly select one of them all who has not had frequent offers of mar-

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riage, which either pride or avarice has not made her reject. Instead of thinking it a disgrace, they take every occasion to boast of their former cruelty; a soldier does not exult more when he counts over the wounds he has received, than a female veteran when she relates the wounds she has formerly given: exhaustless when she begins a narrative of the former death-dealing power of her eyes. She tells of the knight in gold lace, who died with a single frown, and never rose again till —he was married to his maid; of the squire who, being cruelly denied, in a rage flew to the window, and, lifting up the sash, threw himself in an agony —into his arm-chair; of the parson who, crossed in love, resolutely swallowed opium, which banished the stings of despised love by—making him sleep. In short, she talks over her former losses with pleasure, and, like some tradesmen, finds consolation in the many bankruptcies she has suffered.

"For this reason, whenever I see a superannuated beauty still unmarried, I tacitly accuse her either of pride, avarice, coquetry, or affectation. There 's Miss Jenny Tinderbox—I once remember her to have had some beauty, and a moderate fortune. Her elder sister happened to marry a man of quality, and this seemed as a statute of virginity against poor Jane. Because there was one lucky hit in the family, she was resolved not to disgrace it by introducing a tradesman. By thus rejecting her equals, and neglected or despised by her superiors, she now acts in the capacity of

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tutoress to her sister's children, and undergoes the drudgery of three servants, without receiving the wages of one.

"Miss Squeeze was a pawnbroker's daughter; her father had early taught her that money was a very good thing, and left her a moderate fortune at his death. She was so perfectly sensible of the value of what she had got, that she was resolved never to part with a farthing without an equality on the part of her suitor: she thus refused several offers made her by people who wanted to better themselves, as the saying is; and grew old and ill-natured, without ever considering that she should have made an abatement in her pretensions from her face being pale and marked with the small-pox.

"Lady Betty Tempest, on the contrary, had beauty, with fortune and family. But, fond of conquest, she passed from triumph to triumph: she had read plays and romances, and there had learned that a plain man of common sense was no better than a fool; such she refused, and sighed only for the gay, giddy, inconstant, and thoughtless; after she had thus rejected hundreds who liked her, and sighed for hundreds who despised her, she found herself insensibly deserted; at present she is company only for her aunts and cousins, and sometimes makes one in a country dance, with only one of the chairs for a partner, casts off round a joint-stool, and sets to a corner cupboard. In a word, she is treated with civil contempt

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from every quarter, and placed, like a piece of old-fashioned lumber, merely to fill up a corner.

"But Sophronia, the sagacious Sophronia, how shall I mention her? She was taught to love Greek and hate the men from her very infancy; she has rejected fine gentlemen because they were not pedants, and pedants because they were not fine gentlemen; her exquisite sensibility has taught her to discover every fault in every lover, and her inflexible justice has prevented her pardoning them; thus she rejected several offers, till the wrinkles of age had overtaken her; and now, without one good feature in her face, she talks incessantly of the beauties of the mind." Farewell.

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LETTER XXIX

A DESCRIPTION OF A CLUB OF AUTHORS

From the Same

WERE we to estimate the learning of the English by the number of books that are every day published among them, perhaps no country, not China itself, could equal them in this particular. I have reckoned not less than twenty-three new books published in one day; which, upon computation, makes eight thousand three hundred and ninety-five in one year. Most of these are not confined to one single science, but embrace the whole circle. History, politics, poetry, mathematics, metaphysics, and the philosophy of nature, are all comprised in a manual not larger than that in which our children are taught the letters. If, then, we suppose the learned of England to read but an eighth part of the works which daily come from the press—and sure none can pretend to learning upon less easy terms—at this rate, every scholar will read a thousand books in one year. From such a calculation you may conjecture

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what an amazing fund of literature a man must be possessed of, who thus reads three new books every day, not one of which but contains all the good things that ever were said or written.

And yet I know not how it happens, but the English are not in reality so learned as would seem from this calculation. We meet but few who know all arts and sciences to perfection, whether it is that the generality are incapable of such extensive knowledge, or that the authors of those books are not adequate instructors. In China, the emperor himself takes cognisance of all the doctors in the kingdom who profess authorship.[1] In England, every man may be an author that can write; for they have by law a liberty not only of saying what they please, but of being also as dull as they please.

Yesterday I testified my surprise to the Man in Black, where writers could be found in sufficient number to throw off the books I daily saw crowding from the press. I at first imagined that their learned seminaries might take this method of

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[1] "One of the most remarkable national peculiarities of China is their extraordinary addiction to letters, and the very honourable pre-eminence which, from the most remote period, has been universally conceded to that class which is exclusively devoted to literary pursuits. Everything that is subservient to, or connected with, literary objects in China is carried to a degree of refinement, and blended with all their ordinary concerns of pleasure and of business, in a way that may seem extravagant and puerile. Their customary reverence for letters is such that they will not tread upon written or printed paper."—Sir George Staunton's *Miscellaneous Notices*, p. ii., chap. 6.

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instructing the world. But to obviate this objection, my companion assured me that the doctors of colleges never wrote, and that some of them had actually forgot their reading: "But if you desire," continued he, "to see a collection of authors, I fancy I can introduce you this evening to a club which assembles every Saturday at seven, at the sign of 'The Broom' near Islington,[1] to talk over the business of the last and the entertainment of the week ensuing." I accepted his invitation; we walked together, and entered the house some time before the usual hour for the company assembling.

My friend took this opportunity of letting me into the characters of the principal members of the club, not even the host excepted; who, it seems, was once an author himself, but preferred by a bookseller to this situation as a reward for his former services.

"The first person," said he, "of our society, is Doctor Nonentity, a metaphysician. Most people think him a profound scholar; but as he seldom speaks, I cannot be positive in that particular; he generally spreads himself before the fire, sucks his pipe, talks little, drinks much, and is reckoned very good company. I 'm told he writes indexes to perfection; he makes essays on the origin of evil, philosophical inquiries upon any subject

[1] Islington was one of Goldsmith's frequent resorts and occasional residences. Some of the supposed authors in this and the succeeding letter were no doubt real characters.

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and draws up an answer to any book upon twenty-four hours warning. You may distinguish him from the rest of the company by his long grey wig, and the blue handkerchief round his neck.

"The next to him in merit and esteem is Tim Syllabub, a droll creature; he sometimes shines as a star of the first magnitude among the choice spirits of the age: he is reckoned equally excellent at a rebus, a riddle, a bawdy song, and an hymn for the Tabernacle. You will know him by his shabby finery, his powdered wig, dirty shirt, and broken silk stockings.

"After him succeeds Mr. Tibbs, a very useful hand; he writes receipts for the bite of a mad dog, and throws off an Eastern tale to perfection; he understands the business of an author as well as any man, for no bookseller alive can cheat him. You may distinguish him by the peculiar clumsiness of his figure, and the coarseness of his coat: however, though it be coarse (as he frequently tells the company), he has paid for it.

"Lawyer Squint is the politician of the society: he makes speeches for Parliament, writes addresses to his fellow-subjects, and letters to noble commanders; he gives the history of every new play, and finds 'seasonable thoughts' upon every occasion." My companion was proceeding in his description, when the host came running in, with terror on his countenance, to tell us that the door was beset with bailiffs. "If that be the case then," says my companion, "we had as good be going,

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for I am positive we shall not see one of the company this night." Wherefore, disappointed, we were both obliged to return home: he to enjoy the oddities which compose his character alone, and I to write as usual to my friend the occurrences of the day. Adieu.

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LETTER XXX

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB OF AUTHORS

From the Same

BY my last advices from Moscow I find the caravan has not yet departed for China. I still continue to write, expecting that you may receive a large number of my letters at once. In them you will find rather a minute detail of English peculiarities, than a general picture of their manners or disposition. Happy it were for mankind if all travellers would thus, instead of characterising a people in general terms, lead us into a detail of those minute circumstances which at first influenced their opinion. The genius of a country should be investigated with a kind of experimental inquiry; by this means we should have more precise and just notions of foreign nations, and detect travellers themselves when they happened to form wrong conclusions.

My friend and I repeated our visit to the Club of Authors; where, upon our entrance, we found the members all assembled and engaged in a loud debate.

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The poet, in shabby finery, holding a manuscript in his hand, was earnestly endeavouring to persuade the company to hear him read the first book of an heroic poem, which he had composed the day before. But against this all the members very warmly objected. They knew no reason why any member of the club should be indulged with a particular hearing, when many of them had published whole volumes which had never been looked in. They insisted that the law should be observed, where reading in company was expressly noticed. It was in vain that the plaintiff pleaded the peculiar merit of his piece: he spoke to an assembly insensible to all his remonstrances; the book of laws was opened, and read by the secretary, where it was expressly enacted, "That whatsoever poet, speech-maker, critic, or historian, should presume to engage the company by reading his own works, he was to lay down sixpence previous to opening the manuscript, and should be charged one shilling an hour while he continued reading: the said shilling to be equally distributed among the company as a recompense for their trouble."

Our poet at first seemed to shrink at the penalty, hesitating for some time whether he should deposit the fine or shut up the poem; but looking round, and perceiving two strangers in the room, his love of fame outweighed his prudence, and, laying down the sum by law established, he insisted on his prerogative.

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A profound silence ensuing, he began by explaining his design. "Gentlemen," says he, "the present piece is not one of your common epic poems, which come from the press like paper kites in summer: there are none of your Turnuses or Didos in it; it is an heroical description of Nature. I only beg you'll endeavour to make your souls unison with mine, and hear with the same enthusiasm with which I have written. The poem begins with the description of an author's bed-chamber: the picture was sketched in my own apartment, for you must know, gentlemen, that I am myself the hero." Then putting himself into the attitude of an orator, with all the emphasis of voice and action, he proceeded:

Where the Red Lion flaring o'er the way,
Invites each passing stranger that can pay;
Where Calvert's butt, and Parson's black champagne,
Regale the drabs and bloods of Drury-lane;
There in a lonely room, from bailiffs snug,
The muse found Scroggen stretch'd beneath a rug.
A window patch'd with paper lent a ray,
That dimly show'd the state in which he lay:
The sanded floor that grits beneath the tread;
The humid wall with paltry pictures spread;
The royal game of goose was there in view,
And the twelve rules the royal martyr drew;
The seasons fram'd with listing found a place,
And brave Prince William show'd his lamp-black face: [1]

[1] "And Prussia's monarch show'd his lamp-black face." See GOLDSMITH'S Letter to his brother in Vol. X.

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The morn was cold, he views with keen desire
The rusty grate, unconscious of a fire;
With beer and milk arrears the frieze was scored,
And five crack'd tea-cups dress'd the chimney board,
A night-cap deck'd his brows instead of bay,
A cap by night—a stocking all the day!

With this last line he seemed so much elated that he was unable to proceed. "There, gentlemen," he cries, "there is a description for you; Rabelais' bed-chamber is but a fool to it.

A cap by night—a stocking all the day!

there is sound and sense, and truth, and nature in the trifling compass of ten little syllables."

He was too much employed in self-admiration to observe the company; who, by nods, winks, shrugs, and stifled laughter, testified every mark of contempt. He turned severally to each for their opinion, and found all, however, ready to applaud. One swore that it was inimitable; another said it was damn'd fine; and a third cried out in a rapture, "Carissimo!" At last, addressing himself to the president, "And pray, Mr. Squint," says he, "let us have your opinion." "Mine!" answered the president, taking the manuscript out of the author's hand,—"may this glass suffocate me but I think it equal to anything I have seen; and I fancy," continued he, doubling up the poem, and forcing it into the author's pocket, "that you will get great honour when it comes out: so I shall beg leave to put it in. We will not

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intrude upon your good-nature, in desiring to hear more of it at present; *ex ungue Herculem*, we are satisfied, perfectly satisfied." The author made two or three attempts to pull it out a second time, and the president made as many to prevent him. Thus, though with reluctance, he was at last obliged to sit down, contented with the commendations for which he had paid.

When this tempest of poetry and praise had blown over, one of the company changed the subject, by wondering how any man could be so dull as to write poetry at present, since prose itself would hardly pay: "Would you think it, gentlemen," continued he, "I have actually written last week sixteen prayers, twelve bawdy jests, and three sermons, all at the rate of sixpence apiece; and what is still more extraordinary, the bookseller has lost by the bargain. Such sermons would once have gained me a prebend's stall; but now, alas, we have neither piety, taste, nor humour among us. Positively, if this season does not turn out better than it has begun, unless the ministry commit some blunders to furnish us with a new topic of abuse, I shall resume my old business of working at the press, instead of finding it employment."

The whole club seemed to join in condemning the season, as one of the worst that had come for some time; a gentleman particularly observed that the nobility were never known to subscribe worse than at present. "I know not how it hap-

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pens," said he, "though I follow them up as close as possible, yet I can hardly get a single subscription in a week. The houses of the great are as inaccessible as a frontier garrison at midnight. I never see a nobleman's door half-opened that some surly porter or footman does not stand full in the breach. I was yesterday to wait with a subscription proposal upon my Lord Squash the creolian. I had posted myself at his door the whole morning, and, just as he was getting into his coach, thrust my proposal snug into his hand, folded up in the form of a letter from myself. He just glanced at the superscription, and, not knowing the hand, consigned it to his valet-de chambre; this respectable personage treated it as his master, and put it into the hands of the porter; the porter grasped my proposal frowning, and, measuring my figure from top to toe, put it back into my own hands unopened."

"To the devil I pitch all the nobility!" cries a little man, in a peculiar accent. "I am sure they have of late used me most scurvily. You must know, gentlemen, some time ago, upon the arrival of a certain noble duke from his travels, I set myself down, and vamped up a fine flaunting poetical panegyric, which I had written in such a strain that I fancied it would have even wheedled milk from a mouse. In this I represented the whole kingdom welcoming his grace to his native soil, not forgetting the loss France and Italy would sustain in their arts by his departure. I expected

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to touch for a bank-bill at least; so folding up my verses in gilt-paper, I gave my last half-crown to a genteel servant to be the bearer. My letter was safely conveyed to his grace, and the servant, after four hours' absence, during which time I led the life of a fiend, returned with a letter four times as big as mine. Guess my ecstasy at the prospect of so fine a return. I eagerly took the packet into my hands, that trembled to receive it. I kept it some time unopened before me, brooding over the expected treasure it contained; when opening it, as I hope to be saved, gentlemen, his grace had sent me in payment for my poem no bank-bills, but six copies of verse, each longer than mine, addressed to him upon the same occasion."

"A nobleman," cries a member, who had hitherto been silent, "is created as much for the confusion of us authors as the catch-pole. I 'll tell you a story, gentlemen, which is as true as that this pipe is made of clay. When I was delivered of my first book, I owed my tailor for a suit of clothes; but that is nothing new, you know, and may be any man's case as well as mine. Well, owing him for a suit of clothes, and hearing that my book took very well, he sent for his money, and insisted upon being paid immediately; though I was at that time rich in fame, for my book run like wild-fire, yet I was very short in money, and, being unable to satisfy his demand, prudently resolved to keep my chamber, preferring a prison of my own choosing, at

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home, to one of my tailor's choosing abroad. In vain the bailiffs used all their arts to decoy me from my citadel; in vain they sent to let me know that a gentleman wanted to speak with me at the next tavern; in vain they came with an urgent message from my aunt in the country; in vain I was told that a particular friend was at the point of death, and desired to take his last farewell: I was deaf, insensible, rock, adamant; the bailiffs could make no impression on my hard heart, for I effectually kept my liberty by never stirring out of the room.

"This was very well for a fortnight; when one morning I received a most splendid message from the Earl of Doomsday, importing that he had read my book, and was in raptures with every line of it; he impatiently longed to see the author, and had some designs which might turn out greatly to my advantage. I paused upon the contents of this message, and found there could be no deceit, for the card was gilt at the edges, and the bearer, I was told, had quite the looks of a gentleman. Witness, ye powers, how my heart triumphed at my own importance! I saw a long perspective of felicity before me; I applauded the taste of the times, which never saw genius forsaken; I had prepared a set introductory speech for the occasion, five glaring compliments for his lordship, and two more modest for myself. The next morning, therefore, in order to be punctual to my appointment, I took coach, and ordered the fellow to drive to the street and

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house mentioned in his lordship's address. I had the precaution to pull up the window as I went along, to keep off the busy part of mankind, and, big with expectation, fancied the coach never went fast enough. At length, however, the wished-for moment of its stopping arrived; this for some time I impatiently expected, and letting down the window in a transport, in order to take a previous view of his lordship's magnificent palace and situation, I found—poison to my sight! I found myself not in an elegant street, but a paltry lane; not a nobleman's door, but the door of a sponging-house: I found the coachman had all this while been driving me to jail, and I saw the bailiff with a devil's face coming out to secure me."

To a philosopher no circumstance, however trifling, is too minute; he finds instruction and entertainment in occurrences which are passed over by the rest of mankind as low, trite, and indifferent; it is from the number of these particulars, which to many appear insignificant, that he is at last enabled to form general conclusions; this, therefore, must be my excuse for sending so far as China accounts of manners and follies, which, though minute in their own nature, serve more truly to characterise this people than histories of their public treaties, courts, ministers, negotiations, and ambassadors. Adieu.

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LETTER XXXI

THE PERFECTION OF THE CHINESE IN THE ART OF GARDENING—DESCRIPTION OF A CHINESE GARDEN

From the Same

THE English have not yet brought the art of gardening to the same perfection with the Chinese, but have lately begun to imitate them: nature is now followed with greater assiduity than formerly; the trees are suffered to shoot out into the utmost luxuriance; the streams, no longer forced from their native beds, are permitted to wind along the valleys; spontaneous flowers take place of the finished parterre, and the enamelled meadow of the shaven green.

Yet still the English are far behind us in this charming art; their designers have not yet attained a power of uniting instruction with beauty. An European will scarcely conceive my meaning when I say there is scarce a garden in China which does not contain some fine moral, couched under the general design, where one is not taught wisdom

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as he walks, and feels the force of some noble truth, or delicate precept, resulting from the disposition of the groves, streams, or grottoes. Permit me to illustrate what I mean by a description of my gardens at Quamsi. My heart still hovers round those scenes of former happiness with pleasure; and I find a satisfaction in enjoying them at this distance, though but in imagination.

You descended from the house between two groves of trees, planted in such a manner that they were impenetrable to the eye; while on each hand the way was adorned with all that was beautiful in porcelain, statuary, and painting. This passage from the house opened into an area surrounded with rocks, flowers, trees, and shrubs, but all so disposed as if each was the spontaneous production of nature. As you proceeded forward on this lawn, to your right and left hand were two gates opposite each other, of very different architecture and design; and before you lay a temple, built rather with minute elegance than ostentation.

The right-hand gate was planned with the utmost simplicity, or rather rudeness; ivy clasped round the pillars, the baleful cypress hung over it; time seemed to have destroyed all the smoothness and regularity of the stone; two champions with lifted clubs appeared in the act of guarding its access; dragons and serpents were seen in the most hideous attitudes, to deter the spectator from approaching; and the perspective view that lay behind seemed dark and gloomy to the last degree; the stranger

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was tempted to enter only from the motto—*Pervia Virtuti.*

The opposite gate was formed in a very different manner; the architecture was light, elegant, and inviting; flowers hung in wreaths round the pillars; all was finished in the most exact and masterly manner; the very stone of which it was built still preserved its polish; nymphs, wrought by the hand of a master, in the most alluring attitudes, beckoned the stranger to approach; while all that lay behind, as far as the eye could reach, seemed gay, luxuriant, and capable of affording endless pleasure. The motto itself contributed to invite him, for over the gate were written these words: *Facilis Descensus.*

By this time I fancy you begin to perceive that the gloomy gate was designed to represent the road to Virtue; the opposite, the more agreeable passage to Vice. It is but natural to suppose that the spectator was always tempted to enter by the gate which offered him so many allurements. I always in these cases left him to his choice; but generally found that he took to the left, which promised most entertainment.

Immediately upon his entering the gate of Vice, the trees and flowers were disposed in such a manner as to make the most pleasing impression; but as he walked farther on, he insensibly found the garden assume the air of a wilderness: the landscapes began to darken, the paths grew more intricate, he appeared to go downwards; frightful rocks seemed to hang over his head; gloomy caverns,

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unexpected precipices, awful ruins, heaps of unburied bones, and terrifying sounds caused by unseen waters began to take place of what at first appeared so lovely; it was in vain to attempt returning—the labyrinth was too much perplexed for any but myself to find the way back. In short, when sufficiently impressed with the horrors of what he saw, and the imprudence of his choice, I brought him by a hidden door a shorter way back into the area from whence at first he had strayed.

The gloomy gate now presented itself before the stranger; and though there seemed little in its appearance to tempt his curiosity, yet, encouraged by the motto, he gradually proceeded. The darkness of the entrance, the frightful figures that seemed to obstruct his way, the trees of a mournful green, conspired at first to disgust him; as he went forward, however, all began to open and wear a more pleasing appearance; beautiful cascades, beds of flowers, trees loaded with fruit or blossoms, and unexpected brooks improved the scene; he now found that he was ascending, and, as he proceeded, all nature grew more beautiful; the prospect widened as he went higher, even the air itself seemed to become more pure. Thus pleased and happy from unexpected beauties, I at last led him to an arbour from whence he could view the garden, and the whole country around, and where he might own that the road to Virtue terminated in Happiness.

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Though from this description you may imagine that a vast tract of ground was necessary to exhibit such a pleasing variety in, yet be assured I have seen several gardens in England take ten times the space which mine did, without half the beauty. A very small extent of ground is enough for an elegant taste; the greater room is required if magnificence is in view. There is no spot, though ever so little, which a skilful designer might not thus improve, so as to convey a delicate allegory, and impress the mind with truths the most useful and necessary. Adieu.[1]

[1] This letter was written shortly after the appearance of Sir William (then Mr.) Chambers's work on Chinese Temples, etc. "Sir William's description of Chinese gardening is a mere prose work of imagination, without a shadow of foundation in reality. Their taste is, indeed, extremely defective and vicious on this particular point, and, as an improvement of nature, ranks much on a par with the cramping of their women's feet. The only exception exists in the gardens, or rather parks, of the emperor at Yuen-ming-yuen, which Mr. Barrow describes as grand both in plan and extent; but for a subject to emulate these would be almost criminal, even if it were possible."—DAVIS'S *Chinese*, vol. i., p. 367.

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LETTER XXXII

OF THE DEGENERACY OF SOME OF THE ENGLISH NOBILITY—A MUSHROOM FEAST AMONG THE TARTARS

From the Same

IN a late excursion with my friend into the country, a gentleman with a blue ribbon tied round his shoulder, and a chariot drawn by six horses, passed swiftly by us, attended with a numerous train of captains, lackeys, and coaches filled with women. When we were recovered from dust raised by this cavalcade, and could continue our discourse without danger of suffocation, I observed to my companion that all this state and equipage, which he seemed to despise, would in China be regarded with the utmost reverence, because such distinctions were always the reward of merit; the greatness of a mandarin's retinue being a most certain mark of the superiority of his abilities or virtue.

"The gentleman who has now passed us," replied my companion, "has no claims from his own

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merit to distinction; he is possessed neither of abilities nor virtue; it is enough for him that one of his ancestors was possessed of these qualities two hundred years before him. There was a time, indeed, when his family deserved their titles, but they are long since degenerated, and his ancestors for more than a century have been more and more solicitous to keep up the breed of their dogs and horses than that of their children. This very nobleman, simple as he seems, is descended from a race of statesmen and heroes, but unluckily, his great grandfather marrying a cook-maid, and she having a trifling passion for his lordship's groom, they somehow crossed the strain, and produced an heir who took after his mother in his great love for good eating, and his father in a violent affection for horseflesh. These passions have for some generations passed on from father to son, and are now become the characteristics of the family; his present lordship being equally remarkable for his kitchen and his stable."

"But such a nobleman," cried I, "deserves our pity, thus placed in so high a sphere of life, which only the more exposes to contempt. A king may confer titles, but it is personal merit alone that insures respect. I suppose," added I, "that such men are despised by their equals, neglected by their inferiors, and condemned to live among involuntary dependents in irksome solitude."

"You are still under a mistake," replied my companion, "for though this nobleman is a stranger

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to generosity; though he takes twenty opportunities in a day of letting his guests know how much he despises them; though he is possessed neither of taste, wit, nor wisdom; though incapable of improving others by his conversation, and never known to enrich any by his bounty; yet for all this, his company is eagerly sought after: he is a lord, and that is as much as most people desire in a companion. Quality and title have such allurements that hundreds are ready to give up all their own importance, to cringe, to flatter, to look little, and to pall every pleasure in constraint, merely to be among the great, though without the least hopes of improving their understanding, or sharing their generosity; they might be happy among their equals, but those are despised for company, where they are despised in turn. You saw what a crowd of humble cousins, card-ruined beaus, and captains on half-pay were willing to make up this great man's retinue down to his country-seat. Not one of all these that could not lead a more comfortable life at home in their little lodging of three shillings a week, with their lukewarm dinner, served up between two pewter plates from a cook's-shop. Yet, poor devils! they are willing to undergo the impertinence and pride of their entertainer, merely to be thought to live among the great; they are willing to pass the summer in bondage, though conscious they are taken down only to approve his lordship's taste upon every occasion, to tag all his stupid observations with

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a 'Very true,' to praise his stable, and descant upon his claret and cookery."

"The pitiful humiliations of the gentlemen you are now describing," said I, "put me in mind of a custom among the Tartars of Koreki, not entirely dissimilar to this we are now considering.[1] The Russians, who trade with them, carry thither a kind of mushrooms, which they exchange for furs of squirrels, ermines, sables, and foxes. These mushrooms the rich Tartars lay up in large quantities for the winter; and when a nobleman makes a mushroom-feast, all the neighbours around are invited. The mushrooms are prepared by boiling, by which the water acquires an intoxicating quality, and is a sort of drink which the Tartars prize beyond all other. When the nobility and the ladies are assembled, and the ceremonies usual between people of distinction over, the mushroom-broth goes freely round; they laugh, talk double-entendre, grow fuddled, and become excellent company. The poorer sort, who love mushroom-broth to distraction as well as the rich, but cannot afford it at the first hand, post themselves on these occasions round the huts of the rich, and watch the opportunity of the ladies and gentlemen as they come down to pass their liquor; and, holding a wooden bowl, catch the delicious fluid, very little altered by filtration, being still strongly tinctured with

[1] Van Stralenberg, a writer of credit, gives the same account of this people. *Vide An Historico-Geographical Description of the North-eastern parts of Europe and Asia*, p. 397.—GOLDSMITH.

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the intoxicating quality. Of this they drink with the utmost satisfaction, and thus they get as drunk and as jovial as their betters."

"Happy nobility!" cries my companion, "who can fear no diminution of respect, unless by being seized with stranguary, and who when most drunk are most useful! Though we have not this custom among us, I foresee that if it were introduced we might have many a toad-eater in England ready to drink from the wooden bowl on these occasions, and to praise the flavour of his lordship's liquor. As we have different classes of gentry, who knows but we may see a lord holding the bowl to a minister, a knight holding it to his lordship, and a simple squire drinking it double distilled from the loins of knighthood? For my part, I shall never for the future hear a great man's flatterers haranguing in his praise that I shall not fancy I behold the wooden bowl; for I can see no reason why a man, who can live easily and happily at home, should bear the drudgery of decorum and the impertinence of his entertainer, unless intoxicated with passion for all that was quality; unless he thought that whatever came from the great was delicious, and had the tincture of the mushroom in it." Adieu.

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LETTER XXXIII

THE MANNER OF WRITING AMONG THE CHINESE—THE EASTERN TALES OF MAGAZINES, ETC., RIDICULED

From the Same

I AM disgusted, O Fum Hoam, even to sickness disgusted. Is it possible to bear the presumption of those islanders, when they pretend to instruct me in the ceremonies of China! They lay it down as a maxim that every person who comes from thence must express himself in metaphor; swear by Allah, rail against wine, and behave, and talk, and write like a Turk or Persian. They make no distinction between our elegant manners and the voluptuous barbarities of our Eastern neighbours. Wherever I come, I raise either diffidence or astonishment: some fancy me no Chinese, because I am formed more like a man than a monster; and others wonder to find one born five thousand miles from England endued with common sense. Strange, say they, that a man who has received his education at such a distance from London should have common sense:

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to be born out of England, and yet have common sense! Impossible! He must be some Englishman in disguise; his very visage has nothing of the true exotic barbarity.

I yesterday received an invitation from a lady of distinction, who it seems had collected all her knowledge of Eastern manners from fictions every day propagated here, under the titles of Eastern tales, and Oriental histories. She received me very politely, but seemed to wonder that I neglected bringing opium and a tobacco-box; when chairs were drawn for the rest of the company, I was assigned my place on a cushion on the floor. It was in vain that I protested the Chinese used chairs as in Europe; she understood decorum too well to entertain with the ordinary civilities.

I had scarcely been seated according to her directions when the footman was ordered to pin a napkin under my chin: this I protested against, as being no way Chinese; however, the whole company, who it seems were a club of connoisseurs, gave it unanimously against me, and the napkin was pinned accordingly.

It was impossible to be angry with people who seemed to err only from an excess of politeness, and I sat contented, expecting their importunities were now at an end; but as soon as ever dinner was served, the lady demanded whether I was for a plate of bear's claws [1] or a slice of birds'

[1] "The paws of these animals, which abound in fat, are eaten by the Chinese as a delicacy."—Davis's *Chinese*, vol. ii., p. 338.

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nests?[1] As these were dishes with which I was utterly unacquainted, I was desirous of eating only what I knew, and therefore begged to be helped from a piece of beef that lay on the side table. My request at once disconcerted the whole company. A Chinese eat beef! that could never be! there was no local propriety in Chinese beef, whatever there might be in Chinese pheasant. "Sir," said my entertainer, "I think I have some reasons to fancy myself a judge of these matters; in short the Chinese never eat beef;[2] so that I must be permitted to recommend the pillaw. There was never better dressed at Pekin; the saffron and rice are well boiled, and the spices in perfection."

I had no sooner begun to eat what was laid before me than I found the whole company as much astonished as before; it seems I had made no use of my chop-sticks. A grave gentleman, whom I take to be an author, harangued very learnedly (as the company seemed to think) upon the use which was made of them in China. He entered into a long argument with himself about their first introduction, without once appealing to me, who might be supposed best capable of

[1] "This is a dish in which the Chinese are perfect epicures. The substance thus served up is reduced into very thin filaments, transparent as isinglass, and resembling vermicelli."—DAVIS'S *Chinese*, vol. i., p. 323.

[2] "The general prevalence of Buddhism is probably the reason that beef is scarcely ever used by the Chinese. They, however, make no difficulty whatever of dogs, cats, and even rats."—*Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 334.

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silencing the inquiry. As the gentleman therefore took my silence for a mark of his own superior sagacity, he was resolved to pursue the triumph: he talked of our cities, mountains, and animals, as familiarly as if he had been born in Quamsi, but as erroneously as if a native of the moon. He attempted to prove that I had nothing of the true Chinese cut in my visage; showed that my cheek-bones should have been higher, and my forehead broader. In short, he almost reasoned me out of my country, and effectually persuaded the rest of the company to be of his opinion.

I was going to expose his mistakes, when it was insisted that I had nothing of the true Eastern manner in my delivery. "This gentleman's conversation," (says one of the ladies, who was a great reader,) "is like our own, mere chit-chat and common sense; there is nothing like sense in the true Eastern style, where nothing more is required but sublimity. Oh! for a history of Aboulfaouris, the grand voyager, of genii, magicians, rocks, bags of bullets, giants, and enchanters, where all is great, obscure, magnificent, and unintelligible!"—"I have written many a sheet of Eastern tale myself," interrupts the author, "and I defy the severest critic to say but that I have stuck close to the true manner. I have compared a lady's chin to the snow upon the mountains of Bomek; a soldier's sword to the clouds that obscure the face of heaven. If riches are mentioned, I compared them to the flocks that graze

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the verdant Tefflis; if poverty, to the mists that veil the brow of Mount Baku. I have used *thee* and *thou* upon all occasions; I have described fallen stars, and splitting mountains, not forgetting the little houris, who make a pretty figure in every description. But you shall hear how I generally begin: 'Eben-ben-bolo, who was the son of Ban, was born on the foggy summits of Benderabassi. His beard was whiter than the feathers which veil the breast of the penguin; his eyes were like the eyes of doves, when washed by the dews of the morning; his hair, which hung like the willow weeping over the glassy stream, was so beautiful that it seemed to reflect its own brightness; and his feet were as the feet of a wild deer which fleeth to the tops of the mountains.' There, there is the true Eastern taste for you; every advance made toward the sense is only a deviation from sound. Eastern tales should always be sonorous, lofty, musical, and unmeaning."

I could not avoid smiling to hear a native of England attempt to instruct me in the true Eastern idiom; and after he looked round some time for applause, I presumed to ask him whether he had ever travelled into the East; to which he replied in the negative. I demanded whether he understood Chinese or Arabic; to which also he answered as before. "Then, how, Sir," said I, "can you pretend to determine upon the Eastern style, who are entirely unacquainted with the Eastern writings? Take, Sir, the word of one who is professedly

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a Chinese, and who is actually acquainted with the Arabian writers, that what is palmed upon you daily for an imitation of Eastern writing no way resembles their manner, either in sentiment or diction. In the East similes are seldom used, and metaphors almost wholly unknown; but in China particularly the very reverse of what you allude to takes place: a cool phlegmatic method of writing prevails there. The writers of that country, ever more assiduous to instruct than to please, address rather the judgment than the fancy. Unlike many authors of Europe, who have no consideration of the reader's time, they generally leave more to be understood than they express.

"Besides, Sir, you must not expect from an inhabitant of China the same ignorance, the same unlettered simplicity, that you find in a Turk, Persian, or native of Peru. The Chinese are versed in the sciences as well as you, and are masters of several arts unknown to the people of Europe. Many of them are instructed not only in their own national learning, but are perfectly well acquainted with the languages and learning of the West. If my word in such a case is not to be taken, consult your own travellers on this head, who affirm that the scholars of Pekin and Siam sustain theological theses in Latin. 'The college of Masprend, which is but a league from Siam,' says one of your travellers,[1] 'came in a

[1] *Journal ou Suite du Voyage de Siam, en forme de Lettres familières, fait en 1685 et 1686, par N. L. D. C.*, p. 174, edit. Amstelod. 1686.—GOLDSMITH.

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body to salute our ambassador. Nothing gave me more sincere pleasure than to behold a number of priests, venerable both from age and modesty, followed by a number of youths of all nations, Chinese, Japanese, Tonquinese, of Cochin China, Pegu, and Siam, all willing to pay their respects in the most polite manner imaginable. A Cochin Chinese made an excellent Latin oration upon this occasion; he was succeeded, and even outdone, by a student of Tonquin, who was as well skilled in the Western learning as any scholar of Paris.' Now, Sir, if youths who never stirred from home are so perfectly skilled in your laws and learning, surely more must be expected from one like me, who have travelled so many thousand miles; who have conversed familiarly for several years with the English factors established at Canton, and the missionaries sent us from every part of Europe. The unaffected of every country nearly resemble each other; and a page of our Confucius and of your Tillotson have scarce any material difference. Paltry affectation, strained allusions, and disgusting finery are easily attained by those who choose to wear them; and they are but too frequently the badges of ignorance, or of stupidity, whenever it would endeavour to please."

I was proceeding in my discourse when, looking round, I perceived the company no way attentive to what I attempted, with so much earnestness, to enforce. One lady was whispering her that sat next, another was studying the merits of a fan,

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a third began to yawn, and the author himself fell fast asleep. I thought it, therefore, high time to make a retreat; nor did the company seem to show any regret at my preparations for departure: even the lady who had invited me, with the most mortifying insensibility saw me seize my hat and rise from my cushion; nor was I invited to repeat my visit, because it was found that I aimed at appearing rather a reasonable creature than an outlandish idiot. Adieu.

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LETTER XXXIV

OF THE PRESENT RIDICULOUS PASSION OF THE NOBILITY FOR PAINTING

To the Same

THE polite arts are in this country subject to as many revolutions as its laws or politics: not only the objects of fancy and dress, but even of delicacy and taste, are directed by the capricious influence of fashion. I am told there has been a time when poetry was universally encouraged by the great; when men of the first rank not only patronised the poet, but produced the finest models for his imitation. It was then the English sent forth those glowing rhapsodies which we have so often read over together with rapture; poems big with all the sublimity of Mencius,[1] and supported by reasoning as strong as that of Zimpo.

[1] "Ranking next to Confucius (*similis aut secundus*) is the celebrated Mencius, so called by the Jesuits, from his Chinese name, Meng-tse. He lived about a century after his great predecessor,

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The nobility are ever fond of wisdom, but they are also fond of having it without study; to read poetry required thought, and the English nobility were not fond of thinking; they soon therefore placed their affections upon music, because in this they might indulge an happy vacancy, and yet still have pretensions to delicacy and taste as before. They soon brought their numerous dependents into an approbation of their pleasures; who in turn led their thousand imitators to feel or feign a similitude of passion. Colonies of singers were now imported from abroad at a vast expense, and it was expected the English would soon be able to set examples to Europe. All these expectations, however, were soon dissipated. In spite of the zeal which fired the great, the ignorant vulgar refused to be taught to sing; refused to undergo the ceremonies which were to initiate them in the singing fraternity; thus the colony from abroad dwindled by degrees, for they were of themselves unfortunately incapable of propagating the breed.

Music having thus lost its splendour, painting

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whose doctrines he still farther illustrated and promoted, and left behind him the *fourth* of the sacred books, bearing his own name. Mencius lived to the age of eighty-four. Kea-tsing, an emperor of the Ming dynasty, made one of his real or supposed descendants in the *fifty-sixth* generation a member of the Hânlin college. 'If,' as Dr. Morrison observes, 'the persons who now profess to be the posterity of Confucius and Mencius be really so, their families are probably the most ancient in the world.' It would be difficult to find even a Welsh pedigree to compete with them."—DAVIS's *Chinese*, vol. ii., p. 55.

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is now become the sole object of fashionable care. The title of connoisseur in that art is at present the safest passport into every fashionable society; a well-timed shrug, an admiring attitude, and one or two exotic tones of exclamation, are sufficient qualifications for men of low circumstances to curry favour. Even some of the young nobility are themselves early instructed in handling the pencil, while their happy parents, big with expectation, foresee the walls of every apartment covered with the manufactures of their posterity.

But many of the English are not content with giving all their time to this art at home; some young men of distinction are found to travel through Europe with no other intent than that of understandng and collecting pictures, studying seals, and describing statues. On they travel from this cabinet of curiosities to that gallery of pictures; waste the prime of life in wonder; skilful in pictures, ignorant in men; yet impossible to be reclaimed, because their follies take shelter under the names of delicacy and taste.

It is true, painting should have due encouragement, as the painter can undoubtedly fit up our apartments in a much more elegant manner than the upholsterer; but I should think a man of fashion makes but an indifferent exchange who lays out all that time in furnishing his house which he should have employed in the furniture of his head. A person who shows no other symptoms of taste than his cabinet or gallery,

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might as well boast to me of the furniture of his kitchen.[1]

I know no other motive but vanity that induces the great to testify such an inordinate passion for pictures: after the piece is bought, and gazed at eight or ten days successively, the purchaser's pleasure must surely be over; all the satisfaction he can then have is to show it to others. He may be considered as the guardian of a treasure of which he makes no manner of use: his gallery is furnished not for himself, but the connoisseur, who is generally some humble flatterer, ready to feign a rapture he does not feel, and as necessary to the happiness of a picture-buyer as gazers are to the magnificence of an Asiatic procession.

I have enclosed a letter from a youth of distinction, on his travels, to his father in England; in which he appears addicted to no vice, seems obedient to his governor, of a good natural disposition, and fond of improvement; but at the same time early taught to regard cabinets and galleries as the only proper schools of improvement, and to consider a skill in pictures as the properest knowledge for a man of quality.

"My Lord:

"We have been but two days at Antwerp; where-

[1] "I can have no expectations in an address of this kind either to add to your reputation, or to establish my own. You can gain nothing from my admiration, *as I am ignorant of that art* in which you are said to excel."—GOLDSMITH: *Dedication of "The Deserted Village" to Sir Joshua Reynolds.*

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fore I have sat down as soon as possible to give you some account of what we have seen since our arrival, desirous of letting no opportunity pass without writing to so good a father. Immediately upon alighting from our Rotterdam machine, my governor, who is immoderately fond of paintings, and at the same time an excellent judge, would let no time pass till we paid our respects to the church of the Virgin-Mother, which contains treasure beyond estimation. We took an infinity of pains in knowing its exact dimensions, and differed half a foot in our calculation; so I leave that to some succeeding information. I really believe my governor and I could have lived and died there. There is scarcely a pillar in the whole church that is not adorned by a Rubens, a Vander Meuylen, a Vandyke, or a Wouverman. What attitudes, carnations, and draperies! I am almost induced to pity the English, who have none of those exquisite pieces among them. As we are willing to let slip no opportunity of doing business, we immediately after went to wait on Mr. Hogendorp, whom you have so frequently commended for his judicious collection. His cameos are indeed beyond price; his intaglios not so good. He showed us one of an officiating flamen, which he thought to be an antique; but my governor, who is not to be deceived in these particulars, soon found it to be an arrant *cinque cento*. I could not, however, sufficiently admire the genius of Mr. Hogendorp, who has been able to collect, from all parts of the world, a

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thousand things which nobody knows the use of. Except your lordship and my governor, I do not know anybody I admire so much. He is indeed a surprising genius.

"The next morning early, as we were resolved to take the whole day before us, we sent our compliments to Mr. Van Sprokcken, desiring to see his gallery, which request he very politely complied with. His gallery measures fifty feet by twenty, and is well filled; but what surprised me most of all was to see a holy family just like your lordship's, which this ingenious gentleman assures me is the true original. I own this gave me inexpressible uneasiness, and I fear it will to your lordship, as I had flattered myself that the only original was in your lordship's possession. I would advise you, however, to take yours down till its merit can be ascertained, my governor assuring me that he intends to write a long dissertation to prove its originality. One might study in this city for ages, and still find something new. We went from this to view the cardinal's statues, which are really very fine; there were three spintria executed in a very masterly manner, all arm in arm; the torse which I heard you talk so much of is at last discovered to be a Hercules spinning, and not a Cleopatra bathing, as your lordship had conjectured. There has been a treatise written to prove it.

"My lord Firmly is certainly a Goth, a Vandal, no taste in the world for painting. I wonder how any call him a man of taste: passing through the

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streets of Antwerp a few days ago, and observing the nakedness of the inhabitants, he was so barbarous as to observe that he thought the best method the Flemings could take was to sell their pictures and buy clothes. Ah, Coglione! We shall go to-morrow to Mr. Carwarden's cabinet, and the next day we shall see the curiosities collected by Van Ran; and the day after we shall pay a visit to Mount Calvary, and after that—but I find my paper finished; so, with the most sincere wishes for your lordship's happiness, and with hopes, after having seen Italy, that centre of pleasure, to return home worthy the care and expense which has been generously laid out in my improvement, I remain, my lord, yours," etc.

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LETTER XXXV

THE PHILOSOPHER'S SON DESCRIBES A LADY, HIS FELLOW-CAPTIVE

From Hingpo, a slave in Persia, to Altangi, a travelling philosopher of China, by the way of Moscow

FORTUNE has made me the slave of another, but nature and inclination render me entirely subservient to you; a tyrant commands my body, but you are master of my heart. And yet let not thy inflexible nature condemn me when I confess that I find my soul shrink with my circumstances. I feel my mind not less than my body bend beneath the rigours of servitude; the master whom I serve grows every day more formidable. In spite of reason, which should teach me to despise him, his hideous image fills even my dreams with horror.

A few days ago a Christian slave, who wrought in the gardens, happening to enter an arbour where the tyrant was entertaining the ladies of his harem with coffee, the unhappy captive was instantly stabbed to the heart for his intrusion. I have been preferred to his place, which, though less

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laborious than my former station, is yet more ungrateful, as it brings me nearer him whose presence excites sensations at once of disgust and apprehension.

Into what a state of misery are the modern Persians fallen! A nation famous for setting the world an example of freedom is now become a land of tyrants, and a den of slaves.[1] The houseless Tartar of Kamschatka, who enjoys his herbs and his fish in unmolested freedom, may be envied if compared to the thousands who pine here in hopeless servitude and curse the day that gave them being. Is this just dealing, Heaven, to render millions wretched to swell up the happiness of a few? Cannot the powerful of this earth be happy without our sighs and tears? Must every luxury of the great be woven from the calamities of the poor? It must, it must surely be, that this jarring discordant life is but the prelude to some future harmony: the soul attuned to virtue here shall go from hence to fill up the universal choir where Tien presides in person; where there shall be no tyrants to frown, no shackles to bind, nor no whips to threaten; where I shall once more meet my father with rapture, and give a loose to filial piety, where I shall hang on his neck, and hear the wisdom of his lips, and thank him for all the happiness to which he has introduced me.

[1] "A land of tyrants, and a den of slaves,
Her wretches seek dishonourable graves."
—*The Traveller.*

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The wretch whom fortune has made my master has lately purchased several slaves of both sexes: among the rest I hear a Christian captive talked of with admiration. The eunuch who bought her, and who is accustomed to survey beauty with indifference, speaks of her with emotion. Her pride, however, astonishes her attendant slaves not less than her beauty. It is reported that she refuses the warmest solicitations of her haughty lord; he has even offered to make her one of his four wives upon changing her religion and conforming to his. It is probable she cannot refuse such extraordinary offers, and her delay is perhaps intended to enhance her favours.

I have just now seen her; she inadvertently approached the place, without a veil, where I sat writing. She seemed to regard the heavens alone with fixed attention: there her most ardent gaze was directed. Genius of the sun! what unexpected softness! what animated grace! her beauty seemed the transparent covering of virtue. Celestial beings could not wear a look of more perfection, while sorrow humanised her form, and mixed my admiration with pity. I rose from the bank on which I sat, and she retired; happy that none observed us, for such an interview might have been fatal.

I have regarded, till now, the opulence and the power of my tyrant without envy. I saw him with a mind incapable of enjoying the gift of fortune, and consequently regarded him as one loaded,

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rather than enriched, with its favours; but at present, when I think that so much beauty is reserved only for him, that so many charms should be lavished on a wretch incapable of feeling the greatness of the blessing, I own I feel a reluctance to which I have hitherto been a stranger.

But let not my father impute those uneasy sensations to so trifling a cause as love. No, never let it be thought that your son, and the pupil of the wise Fum Hoam, could stoop to so degrading a passion. I am only displeased at seeing so much excellence so unjustly disposed of.

The uneasiness which I feel is not for myself, but for the beautiful Christian. When I reflect on the barbarity of him for whom she is designed, I pity, indeed I pity her; when I think that she must only share one heart, who deserves to command a thousand, excuse me if I feel an emotion which universal benevolence extorts from me. As I am convinced that you take a pleasure in those sallies of humanity, and are particularly pleased with compassion, I could not avoid discovering the sensibility with which I felt this beautiful stranger's distress. I have for a while forgot, in hers, the miseries of my own hopeless situation: the tyrant grows every day more severe; and love, which softens all other minds into tenderness, seems only to have increased his severity. Adieu.

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LETTER XXXVI

THE BEAUTIFUL CAPTIVE CONSENTS TO MARRY HER LORD

From the Same

THE whole harem is filled with a tumultuous joy. Zelis, the beautiful capitve, has consented to embrace the religion of Mahomet, and become one of the wives of the fastidious Persian. It is impossible to describe the transport that sits on every face on this occasion. Music and feasting fill every apartment, the most miserable slave seems to forget his chains and sympathises with the happiness of Mostadad. The herb we tread beneath our feet is not made more for our use than every slave around him for their imperious master; mere machines of obedience, they wait with silent assiduity, feel his pains, and rejoice in his exultation. Heavens! how much is requisite to make one man happy!

Twelve of the most beautiful slaves, and I among the number, have got orders to prepare for carrying him in triumph to the bridal apart-

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ment. The blaze of perfumed torches are to imitate the day; the dancers and singers are hired at a vast expense. The nuptials are to be celebrated on the approaching feast of Barboura, when an hundred taels in gold are to be distributed among the barren wives, in order to pray for fertility from the approaching union.

What will not riches procure! An hundred domestics, who curse the tyrant in their souls, are commanded to wear a face of joy, and they are joyful. An hundred flatterers are ordered to attend, and they fill his ears with praise. Beauty, all-commanding beauty, sues for admittance, and scarcely receives an answer: even love itself seems to wait upon fortune, or, though the passion be only feigned, yet it wears every appearance of sincerity; and what greater pleasure can even true sincerity confer, or what would the rich have more?

Nothing can exceed the intended magnificence of the bridegroom, but the costly dresses of the bride. Six eunuchs in the most sumptuous habits are to conduct him to the nuptial couch, and wait his orders. Six ladies, in all the magnificence of Persia, are directed to undress the bride. Their business is to assist, to encourage her, to divest her of every encumbering part of her dress, all but the last covering, which, by an artful complication of ribbons, is purposely made difficult to unloose, and with which she is to part reluctantly even to the joyful possessor of her beauty.

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Mostadad, O my father, is no philosopher; and yet he seems perfectly contented with ignorance. Possessed of numberless slaves, camels, and women, he desires no greater possession. He never opened the page of Mencius, and yet all the slaves tell me that he is happy.

Forgive the weakness of my nature if I sometimes feel my heart rebellious to the dictates of wisdom, and eager for happiness like his. Yet why wish for his wealth with his ignorance? to be like him, incapable of sentimental pleasures, incapable of feeling the happiness of making others happy, incapable of teaching the beautiful Zelis philosophy?

What! shall I in a transport of passion give up the golden mean, the universal harmony, the unchanging essence, for the possession of an hundred camels, as many slaves, thirty-five beautiful horses, and seventy-three fine women? First blast me to the centre! degrade me beneath the most degraded! pare my nails, ye powers of Heaven! ere I would stoop to such an exchange. What! part with philosophy, which teaches me to suppress my passions instead of gratifying them, which teaches me even to divest my soul of passion, which teaches serenity in the midst of tortures; philosophy, by which even now I am so very serene, and so very much at ease, to be persuaded to part with it for any other enjoyment! Never, never, even though persuasion spoke in the accents of Zelis!

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A female slave informs me that the bride is to be arrayed in a tissue of silver, and her hair adorned with the largest pearls of Ormus: but why tease you with particulars, in which we both are so little concerned? The pain I feel in separation throws a gloom over my mind, which in this scene of universal joy I fear may be attributed to some other cause: how wretched are those who are, like me, denied even the last resource of misery, their tears. Adieu.

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LETTER XXXVII

THE PHILOSOPHER'S SON BEGINS TO BE DISGUSTED IN THE PURSUIT OF WISDOM—AN ALLEGORY TO PROVE ITS FUTILITY

From the Same

I BEGIN to have doubts whether wisdom be alone sufficient to make us happy: whether every step we make in refinement is not an inlet into new disquietudes. A mind too vigorous and active serves only to consume the body to which it is joined, as the richest jewels are soonest found to wear their settings.

When we rise in knowledge, as the prospect widens the objects of our regard become more obscure, and the unlettered peasant, whose views are only directed to the narrow sphere around him, beholds nature with a finer relish, and tastes her blessings with a keener appetite, than the philosopher whose mind attempts to grasp an universal system.

As I was some days ago pursuing this subject among a circle of my fellow-slaves, an ancient

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Guebre of the number, equally remarkable for his piety and wisdom, seemed touched with my conversation, and desired to illustrate what I had been saying with an allegory taken from the Zend-Avesta of Zoroaster: "By this we shall be taught," says he, "that they who travel in pursuit of wisdom walk only in a circle, and after all their labour at last return to their pristine ignorance; and in this also we shall see that enthusiastic confidence or unsatisfying doubts terminate all our inquiries.

"In early times, before myriads of nations covered the earth, the whole human race lived together in one valley. The simple inhabitants, surrounded on every side by lofty mountains, knew no other world but the little spot to which they were confined. They fancied the heavens bent down to meet the mountain tops and formed an impenetrable wall to surround them. None had ever yet ventured to climb the steepy cliff, in order to explore those regions that lay beyond it; they knew the nature of the skies only from a tradition, which mentioned their being made of adamant: traditions make up the reasonings of the simple, and serve to silence every inquiry.

"In this sequestered vale, blessed with all the spontaneous productions of nature, the honeyed blossom, the refreshing breeze, the gliding brook and golden fruitage, the simple inhabitants seemed happy in themselves, in each other; they desired no greater pleasure, for they knew of none greater;

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ambition, pride, and envy were vices unknown among them; and, from this peculiar simplicity of its possessors, the country was called the Valley of Ignorance.

"At length, however, an unhappy youth, more aspiring than the rest, undertook to climb the mountain's side, and examine the summits which were hitherto deemed inaccessible. The inhabitants from below gazed with wonder at his intrepidity; some applauded his courage, others censured his folly; still, however, he proceeded towards the place where the earth and heavens seemed to unite, and at length arrived at the wished-for heights, with extreme labour and assiduity.

"His first surprise was to find the skies not, as he expected, within his reach, but still as far off as before; his amazement increased when he saw a wide-extended region lying on the opposite side of the mountain; but it rose to astonishment when he beheld a country at a distance more beautiful and alluring than even that he had just left behind.

"As he continued to gaze with wonder, a Genius with a look of infinite modesty, approaching, offered to be his guide and instructor. 'The distant country which you so much admire,' says the angelic being, 'is called the Land of Certainty: in that charming retreat, sentiment contributes to refine every sensual banquet; the inhabitants are blessed with every solid enjoyment, and still more blessed in a perfect consciousness

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of their own felicity; ignorance in that country is wholly unknown; all there is satisfaction without alloy, for every pleasure first undergoes the examination of reason. As for me, I am called the Genius of Demonstration, and am stationed here in order to conduct every adventurer to the land of happiness through those intervening regions you see overhung with fogs and darkness and horrid with forests, cataracts, caverns, and various other shapes of danger. But follow me, and in time I may lead you to that distant desirable land of tranquillity.'

"The intrepid traveller immediately put himself under the direction of the Genius, and both, journeying on together with a slow but agreeable pace, deceived the tediousness of the way by conversation. The beginning of the journey seemed to promise true satisfaction, but as they proceeded forward the skies became more gloomy and the way more intricate; they often inadvertently approached the brow of some frightful precipice, or the brink of a torrent, and were obliged to measure back their former way. The gloom increasing as they proceeded, their pace became more slow; they paused at every step, frequently stumbled, and their distrust and timidity increased. The Genius of Demonstration now therefore advised his pupil to grope upon hands and feet, as a method, though more slow, yet less liable to error.

"In this manner they attempted to pursue their journey for some time, when they were overtaken

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by another Genius, who, with a precipitate pace, seemed travelling the same way. He was instantly known by the other to be the Genius of Probability. He wore two wide-extended wings at his back, which incessantly waved without increasing the rapidity of his motion; his countenance betrayed a confidence that the ignorant might mistake for sincerity, and he had but one eye, which was fixed in the middle of his forehead.

"'Servant of Hormizda,' cried he, approaching the mortal pilgrim, 'if thou art travelling to the Land of Certainty, how is it possible to arrive there under the guidance of a Genius who proceeds forward so slowly, and is so little acquainted with the way? Follow me; we shall soon perform the journey to where every pleasure awaits our arrival.'

"The peremptory tone in which this Genius spoke, and the speed with which he moved forward, induced the traveller to change his conductor, and, leaving his modest companion behind, he proceeded forward with his more confident director, seeming not a little pleased at the increased velocity of his motion.

"But soon he found reasons to repent. Whenever a torrent crossed their way, his guide taught him to despise the obstacle by plunging him in; whenever a precipice presented, he was directed to fling himself forward. Thus each moment miraculously escaping, his repeated escapes only served to increase his guide's temerity. He led

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him therefore forward, amidst infinite difficulties, till they arrived at the borders of an ocean, which appeared unnavigable from the black mists that lay upon its surface. Its unquiet waves were of the darkest hue, and gave a lively representation of the various agitations of the human mind.

"The Genius of Probability now confessed his temerity, owned his being an improper guide to the Land of Certainty, a country where no mortal had ever been permitted to arrive; but at the same time offered to supply the traveller with another conductor, who should carry him to the Land of Confidence, a region where the inhabitants lived with the utmost tranquillity, and tasted almost as much satisfaction as if in the Land of Certainty. Not waiting for a reply, he stamped three times on the ground, and called forth the Demon of Error, a gloomy fiend of the servants of Arimanes. The yawning earth gave up the reluctant savage, who seemed unable to bear the light of the day. His stature was enormous, his colour black and hideous, his aspect betrayed a thousand varying passions, and he spread forth pinions that were fitted for the most rapid flight. The traveller at first was shocked at the spectre; but, finding him obedient to superior power, he assumed his former tranquillity.

" 'I have called you to duty,' cries the Genius to the Demon, 'to bear on your back a son of mortality over the Ocean of Doubts into the Land of Confidence: I expect you 'll perform your com-

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mission with punctuality. And as for you,' continued the Genius, addressing the traveller, 'when once I have bound this fillet round your eyes, let no voice of persuasion, nor threats the most terrifying, induce you to unbind it in order to look round; keep the fillet fast, look not at the ocean below, and you may certainly expect to arrive at a region of pleasure.'

"Thus saying, and the traveller's eyes being covered, the Demon, muttering curses, raised him on his back, and instantly, upborne by his strong pinions, directed his flight among the clouds. Neither the loudest thunder, nor the most angry tempest, could persuade the traveller to unbind his eyes. The Demon directed his flight downwards, and skimmed the surface of the ocean; a thousand voices, some with loud invectives, others in the saracastic tones of contempt, vainly endeavoured to persuade him to look round; but he still continued to keep his eyes covered, and would in all probability have arrived at the happy land had not flattery effected what other means could not perform. For now he heard himself welcomed on every side to the promised land, and an universal shout of joy was sent forth at his safe arrival. The wearied traveller, desirous of seeing the long-wished-for country, at length pulled the fillet from his eyes, and ventured to look round him. But he had unloosened the band too soon; he was not yet above half way over. The Demon, who was still hovering in the air, and had

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produced those sounds only in order to deceive, was now freed from his commission; wherefore throwing the astonished traveller from his back, the unhappy youth fell headlong into the subjacent Ocean of Doubts, from whence he never after was seen to rise."

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LETTER XXXVIII

THE CHINESE PHILOSOPHER PRAISES THE JUSTICE OF A LATE BRITISH SENTENCE

From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first president of the Ceremonial Academy at Pekin in China.

WHEN Parmenio, the Grecian, had done something which excited an universal shout from the surrounding multitude, he was instantly struck with the doubt that what had their approbation must certainly be wrong; and turning to a philosopher, who stood near him, "Pray, Sir," says he, "pardon me; I fear I have been guilty of some absurdity."

You know that I am not less than him a despiser of the multitude; you know that I equally detest flattery to the great; yet so many circumstances have concurred to give a lustre to the latter part of the present English monarch's reign, that I cannot withhold my contribution of praise; I cannot avoid acknowledging the crowd, for once, just in their unanimous approbation.

Yet think not the battles gained, dominion extended, or enemies brought to submission, are the virtues which at present claim my admiration.

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Were the reigning monarch only famous for his victories, I should regard his character with indifference; the boast of heroism in this enlightened age is justly regarded as a qualification of a very subordinate rank, and mankind now begin to look with becoming horror on these foes to man. The virtue in this aged monarch, which I have at present in view, is one of a much more exalted nature, is one the most difficult of attainment, is the least praised of all kingly virtues, and yet deserves the greatest praise: the virtue I mean is Justice; a strict administration of justice, without severity and without favour.

Of all virtues this is the most difficult to be practised by a king who has a power to pardon. All men, even tyrants themselves, lean to mercy when unbiassed by passions or interest; the heart naturally persuades to forgiveness, and, pursuing the dictates of this pleasing deceiver, we are led to prefer our private satisfaction to public utility. What a thorough love for the public, what a strong command over the passions, what a finely-conducted judgment must he possess who opposes the dictates of reason to those of his heart, and prefers the future interest of his people to his own immediate satisfaction!

If still to a man's own natural bias for tenderness we add the numerous solicitations made by a criminal's friends for mercy; if we survey a king not only opposing his own feelings, but reluctantly refusing those he regards, and this to satisfy the

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public, whose cries he may never hear, whose gratitude he may never receive—this surely is true greatness! Let us fancy ourselves for a moment in this just old man's place, surrounded by numbers, all soliciting the same favour, a favour that nature disposes us to grant, where the inducements to pity are laid before us in the strongest light, suppliants at our feet, some ready to resent a refusal, none opposing a compliance; let us, I say, suppose ourselves in such a situation, and I fancy we should find ourselves more apt to act the character of good-natured men than of upright magistrates.

What contributes to raise justice above all other kingly virtues is that it is seldom attended with a due share of applause, and those who practise it must be influenced by greater motives than empty fame; the people are generally well pleased with a remission of punishment, and all that wears the appearance of humanity; it is the wise alone who are capable of discerning that impartial justice is the truest mercy; they know it to be very difficult at once to compassionate and yet condemn an object that pleads for tenderness.

I have been led into this commonplace train of thought by a late striking instance in this country of the impartiality of justice, and of the king's inflexible resolution of inflicting punishment where it was justly due. A man of the first quality,[1]

[1] Earl Ferrers, hanged at Tyburn, May 5, 1760, for murdering his steward. "Two petitions from the earl's mother and his family

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in a fit either of passion, melancholy, or madness, murdered his servant. It was expected that his station in life would have lessened the ignominy of his punishment; however, he was arraigned, condemned, and underwent the same degrading death with the meanest malefactor. It was well considered that virtue alone is true nobility, and that he whose actions sink him even beneath the vulgar has no right to those distinctions which should be the rewards only of merit; it was perhaps considered that crimes were more heinous among the higher classes of people, as necessity exposes them to fewer temptations.

Over all the East, even China not excepted, a person of the same quality guilty of such a crime might, by giving up a share of his fortune to the judge, buy off his sentence. There are several countries, even in Europe, where the servant is entirely the property of his master; if a slave kills his lord, he dies by the most excruciating tortures; but if the circumstances are reversed, a small fine buys off the punishment of the offender. Happy the country where all are equal, and where those who sit as judges have too much integrity to receive a bribe, and too much honour to pity, from a similitude of the prisoner's title or circumstances with their own! Such is England; yet think not that it was always equally famed for

were presented to the King, who said, as the House of Lords had unanimously found him guilty, he would not interfere."—HORACE WALPOLE *to Sir Horace Mann*, vol. iii., p. 353. See also *The Citizen of the World*, Letter xlv., p. 262.

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this strict impartiality. There was a time, even here, when title softened the rigours of the law, when dignified wretches were suffered to live, and continue for years an equal disgrace to justice and nobility.

To this day, in a neighbouring country, the great are often most scandalously pardoned for the most scandalous offences. A person is still alive among them who has more than once deserved the most ignominious severity of justice.[1] His being of the blood royal, however, was thought a sufficient atonement for his being a disgrace to humanity. This remarkable personage took pleasure in shooting at the passengers below, from the top of his palace; and in this most princely amusement he usually spent some time every day. He was at length arraigned by the friends of a person whom in this manner he had killed, and was found guilty of the charge, and condemned to die. His merciful monarch pardoned him in consideration of his rank and quality. The unrepenting criminal soon after renewed his usual entertainment, and in the same manner killed another man. He was a second time condemned; and, strange to think, a second time received His Majesty's pardon! Would you believe it? A third time the very same man was guilty of the very same offence; a third time, therefore, the laws of his country found him guilty

[1] The Prince of Charolais.

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—I wish for the honour of humanity I could suppress the rest—a third time he was pardoned. Will you not think such a story too extraordinary for belief? will you not think me describing the savage inhabitants of Congo? Alas! the story is but too true, and the country where it was transacted regards itself as the politest in Europe! Adieu.

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LETTER XXXIX

DESCRIPTION OF TRUE POLITENESS—TWO LETTERS OF DIFFERENT COUNTRIES, BY LADIES FALSELY THOUGHT POLITE AT HOME

*From Lien Chi Altangi to * * * *, Merchant in Amsterdam.*

CEREMONIES are different in every country; but true politeness is everywhere the same. Ceremonies, which take up so much of our attention, are only artificial helps which ignorance assumes, in order to imitate politeness, which is the result of good sense and good nature. A person possessed of those qualities, though he had never seen a court, is truly agreeable; and if without them would continue a clown, though he had been all his life a gentleman usher.

How would a Chinese, bred up in the formalities of an Eastern court, be regarded, should he carry all his good manners beyond the Great Wall? How would an Englishman, skilled in all the decorums of Western good-breeding, appear at an Eastern entertainment—would he not be reckoned

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more fantastically savage than even his unbred footman?

Ceremony resembles that base coin which circulates through a country by the royal mandate; it serves every purpose of real money at home, but is entirely useless if carried abroad: a person who should attempt to circulate his native trash in another country would be thought either ridiculous or culpable. He is truly well bred who knows when to value and when to despise those national peculiarities which are regarded by some with so much observance: a traveller of taste at once perceives that the wise are polite all the world over, but that fools are polite only at home.

I have now before me two very fashionable letters upon the same subject, both written by ladies of distinction—one of whom leads the fashion in England, and the other sets the ceremonies of China; they are both regarded in their respective countries by all the *beau monde* as standards of taste, and models of true politeness, and both give us a true idea of what they imagine elegant in their admirers: which of them understands true politeness, or whether either, you shall be at liberty to determine. The English lady writes thus to her female confidante:

"As I live, my dear Charlotte, I believe the Colonel will carry it at last; he is a most irresistible fellow, that 's flat. So well dressed, so neat, so sprightly, and plays about one so agreeably, that

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I vow he has as much spirits as the marquis of Monkeyman's Italian greyhound. I first saw him at Ranelagh; he shines there: he is nothing without Ranelagh, and Ranelagh nothing without him. The next day he sent a card and compliments, desiring to wait on Mamma and me to the music subscription. He looked all the time with such irresistible impudence, that positively he had something in his face gave me as much pleasure as a pair-royal of naturals in my own hand. He waited on Mamma and me the next morning to know how we got home: you must know the insidious devil makes love to us both. Rap went the footman at the door; bounce went my heart: I thought he would have rattled the house down. Chariot drove up to the window, with his footmen in the prettiest liveries: he has infinite taste, that 's flat. Mamma had spent all the morning at her head; but for my part, I was in an undress to receive him—quite easy, mind that; no way disturbed at his approach. Mamma pretended to be as *degagée* as I, and yet I saw her blush in spite of her. Positively he is a most killing devil! We did nothing but laugh all the time he staid with us; I never heard so many very good things before. At first he mistook Mamma for my sister, at which she laughed; then he mistook my natural complexion for paint, at which I laughed; then he showed us a picture in the lid of his snuff-box, at which we all laughed. He plays picquet so very ill, and is so very fond of cards, and loses with

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such a grace, that positively he has won me; I have got a cool hundred, but have lost my heart. I need not tell you that he is only a colonel of the train bands.

"I am, dear Charlotte, yours for ever,

"BELINDA."

The Chinese lady addresses her confidante, a poor relation of the family, upon the same occasion; in which she seems to understand decorums even better than the Western beauty. You, who have resided so long in China, will readily acknowledge the picture to be taken from nature; and, by being acquainted with the Chinese customs, will better apprehend the lady's meaning.

FROM YAOUA TO YAYA.

"Papa insists upon one, two, three, four hundred taels from the Colonel, my lover, before he parts with a lock of my hair! Oh, how I wish the dear creature may be able to produce the money, and pay Papa my fortune. The Colonel is reckoned the politest man in all Shensi. The first visit he paid at our house, mercy! what stooping, and cringing, and stopping, and fidgeting, and going back, and creeping forward, there was between him and Papa; one would have thought he had got the seventeen books of ceremonies all by heart. When he was come into the hall he flourished his hands three times in a very graceful manner. Papa, who would not be

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outdone, flourished his four times; upon this the Colonel began again, and both thus continued for some minutes in the politest manner imaginable.[1] I was posted in the usual place behind the screen, where I saw the whole ceremony through a slit. Of this the Colonel was sensible, for Papa informed him. I would have given the world to have shown him my little shoes, but had no opportunity. It was the first time I had ever the happiness of seeing any man but Papa, and I vow, my dear Yaya, I thought my three souls would have actually fled from my lips. Ho! but he looked most charmingly; he is reckoned the best-shaped man in the whole province, for he is very fat and very short; but even those natural advantages are improved by his dress, which is fashionable past description. His head was close-shaven, all but the crown, and the hair of that was braided into a most beautiful tail, that, reaching down to his heels, was terminated by a bunch of yellow roses.[2] Upon his first entering the room

[1] In China the ordinary ceremony among equals is to join the closed hands and lift them two or three times towards the head saying, *Haou; tsing, tsing;* that is, "Are you well? hail! hail!"

[2] In a Chinese novel, translated by Mr. Davis, called *Hung-how-Mung*, or *The Red Chamber Dreams*, is the following description of a Chinese dandy: "His beautiful nose was full and round, like the gall-bladder of a quadruped; and he had a face like the moon in the midst of autumn; from his head to the end of his tail, which dangled to the ankles, hung four strings of precious stones set in gold. His upper tunic was pink, spangled with flowers, his trousers and stockings were embroidered, and his shoes were of a deep red colour, with thick white soles: ten thousand thoughts of love were collected in the corner of his eye."

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I could easily perceive he had been highly perfumed with assafœtida. But then his looks, his looks, my dear Yaya, were irresistible. He kept his eyes steadfastly fixed on the wall during the whole ceremony, and I sincerely believe no accident could have discomposed his gravity, or drawn his eyes away. After a polite silence of two hours, he gallantly begged to have the singing women introduced, purely for my amusement. After one of them had for some time entertained us with her voice, the Colonel and she retired for some minutes together. I thought they would never have come back; I must own he is a most agreeable creature. Upon his return, they again renewed the concert, and he continued to gaze upon the wall as usual, when, in less than half an hour more, ho! but he retired out of the room with another. He is indeed a most agreeable creature.

"When he came to take his leave, the whole ceremony began afresh; Papa would see him to the door, but the Colonel swore he would rather see the earth turned upside down than permit him to stir a single step, and Papa was at last obliged to comply. As soon as he was got to the door, Papa went out to see him on horseback; here they continued half an hour bowing and cringing, before one would mount or the other go in, but the Colonel was at last victorious. He had scarce gone an hundred paces from the house when Papa, running out, hallooed after him, 'A

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good journey!' upon which the Colonel returned and would see Papa into his house before ever he would depart. He was no sooner got home than he sent me a very fine present of duck eggs, painted of twenty different colours. His generosity I own has won me. I have ever since been trying over the eight letters of good fortune,[1] and have great hopes. All I have to apprehend is that, after he has married me, and that I am carried to his house close shut up in my chair, when he comes to have the first sight of my face, he may shut me up a second time and send me back to Papa. However, I shall appear as fine as possible; Mamma and I have been to buy the clothes for my wedding. I am to have a new *foong hoâng* in my hair,[2] the beak of which will reach down to my nose; the milliner from whom we bought that and our ribbons cheated us as if she had no conscience, and so to quiet mine I cheated her. All this is fair, you know.

"I remain, my dear Yaya,

"Your ever faithful

"YAOUA."

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[1] The *pa-kua*, or eight mystical diagrams of Fo-hy.

[2] Unmarried women wear their hair hanging down in long tresses, and the putting up of the hair is one of the ceremonies preparatory to marriage. It is twisted up towards the back of the head, ornamented with flowers or jewels, and fastened with two bodkins stuck in crosswise. They sometimes wear an ornament representing the *foong-hoâng*, or Chinese phœnix, composed of gold and jewels, the wings hovering, and the beak of the bird hanging over the forehead, on an elastic spring."—DAVIS'S *Chinese*, vol. i., p. 358.

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LETTER XL

THE ENGLISH STILL HAVE POETS, THOUGH NOT VERSIFIERS

From the Same

YOU have always testified the highest esteem for the English poets, and thought them not inferior to the Greeks, Romans, or even the Chinese in the art. But it is now thought, even by the English themselves, that the race of their poets is extinct; every day produces some pathetic exclamation upon the decadence of taste and genius. Pegasus, say they, has slipped the bridle from his mouth, and our modern bards attempt to direct his flight by catching him by the tail.

Yet, my friend, it is only among the ignorant that such discourses prevail; men of true discernment can see several poets still among the English, some of whom equal if not surpass their predecessors. The ignorant term that alone poetry which is couched in a certain number of syllables in every line, where a vapid thought is

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drawn out into a number of verses of equal length, and perhaps pointed with rhymes at the end. But glowing sentiment, striking imagery, concise expression, natural description, and modulated periods are fully sufficient entirely to fill up my idea of this art, and make way to every passion.

If my idea of poetry therefore be just, the English are not at present so destitute of poetical merit as they seem to imagine. I can see several poets in disguise among them; men furnished with that strength of soul, sublimity of sentiment, and grandeur of expression which constitutes the character. Many of the writers of their modern odes, sonnets, tragedies, or rebuses, it is true deserve not the name, though they have done nothing but clink rhymes and measure syllables for years together: their Johnsons and Smolletts are truly poets; though for aught I know they never made a single verse in their whole lives.

In every incipient language, the poet and the prose writer are very distinct in their qualifications: the poet ever proceeds first, treading unbeaten paths, enriching his native funds, and employed in new adventures. The other follows with more cautious steps, and, though slow in his motions, treasures up every useful or pleasing discovery. But when once all the extent and the force of the language is known, the poet then seems to rest from his labour, and is at length overtaken by his assiduous pursuer. Both characters are then blended into one; the historian

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and orator catch all the poet's fire, and leave him no real mark of distinction, except the iteration of numbers regularly returning. Thus in the decline of ancient European learning, Seneca, though he wrote in prose, is as much a poet as Lucan, and Longinus, though but a critic, more sublime than Apollonius.

From this then it appears that poetry is not discontinued, but altered, among the English at present; the outward form seems different from what it was, but poetry still continues internally the same: the only question remains whether the metric feet used by the good writers of the last age, or the prosaic numbers employed by the good writers of this, be preferable? And here the practice of the last age appears to me superior: they submitted to the restraint of numbers and similar sounds; and this restraint, instead of diminishing, augmented the force of their sentiment and style. Fancy restrained may be compared to a fountain which plays highest by diminishing the aperture. Of the truth of this maxim in every language, every fine writer is perfectly sensible from his own experience, and yet to explain the reason would be perhaps as difficult as to make a frigid genius profit by the discovery.

There is still another reason in favour of the practice of the last age, to be drawn from the variety of modulation. The musical period in prose is confined to a very few changes; the numbers in verse are capable of infinite variation.

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I speak not now from the practice of modern verse-writers, few of whom have any idea of musical variety, but run on in the same monotonous flow through the whole poem, but rather from the example of their former poets, who were tolerable masters of this variety, and also from a capacity in the language of still admitting various unanticipated music.

Several rules have been drawn up for varying the poetic measure, and critics have elaborately talked of accents and syllables; but good sense and a fine ear, which rules can never teach, are what alone can in such a case determine. The rapturous flowings of joy, or the interruptions of indignation, require accents placed entirely different, and a structure consonant to the emotions they would express. Changing passions, and numbers changing with those passions, make the whole secret of Western as well as Eastern poetry. In a word, the great faults of the modern professed English poets are, that they seem to want numbers which should vary with the passion, and are more employed in describing to the imagination than striking at the heart. Adieu.

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LETTER XLI

THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE CONGREGATION IN ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL AT PRAYERS

To the Same

SOME time since I sent thee, O holy disciple of Confucius, an account of the grand abbey or mausoleum of the kings and heroes of this nation. I have since been introduced to a temple not so ancient, but far superior in beauty and magnificence. In this, which is the most considerable of the empire, there are no pompous inscriptions, no flattery paid the dead, but all is elegant and awfully simple. There are, however, a few rags hung round the walls, which have, at a vast expense, been taken from the enemy in the present war. The silk of which they are composed, when new, might be valued at half a string of copper money in China; yet this wise people fitted out a fleet and an army in order to seize them; though now grown old, and scarcely capable of being patched up into a handkerchief. By this conquest the English

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are said to have gained, and the French to have lost, much honour. Is the honour of European nations placed only in tattered silk?

In this temple I was permitted to remain during the whole service; and, were you not already acquainted with the religion of the English, you might, from my description, be inclined to believe them as grossly idolatrous as the disciples of Lao. The idol which they seem to address strides like a colossus over the door of the inner temple, which here, as with the Jews, is esteemed the most sacred part of the building. Its oracles are delivered in an hundred various tones, which seem to inspire the worshippers with enthusiasm and awe; an old woman, who appeared to be the priestess, was employed in various attitudes, as she felt the inspiration. When it began to speak, all the people remained fixed in silent attention, nodding assent, looking approbation, appearing highly edified by those sounds which, to a stranger, might seem inarticulate and unmeaning.

When the idol had done speaking, and the priestess had locked up its lungs with a key, observing almost all the company leaving the temple, I concluded the service was over, and taking my hat was going to walk away with the crowd, when I was stopped by the Man in Black, who assured me that the ceremony had scarcely yet begun. "What!" cried I, "do I not see almost the whole body of the worshippers leaving the church? Would you persuade me that such numbers, who

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profess religion and morality, would, in this shameless manner, quit the temple before the service was concluded? You surely mistake: not even the Kalmouks would be guilty of such an indecency, though all the object of their worship was but a joint stool." My friend seemed to blush for his countrymen, assuring me that those whom I saw running away were only a parcel of musical blockheads, whose passion was merely for sounds, and whose heads were as empty as a fiddle-case; "those who remain behind," says he, "are the true religious; they make use of music to warm their hearts, and to lift them to a proper pitch of rapture: examine their behaviour, and you will confess there are some among us who practise true devotion.

I now looked round me as he directed, but saw nothing of that fervent devotion which he had promised: one of the worshippers appeared to be ogling the company through a glass; another was fervent, not in addresses to Heaven, but to his mistress; a third whispered, a fourth took snuff, and the priest himself, in a drowsy tone, read over the *duties* of the day.

"Bless my eyes," cried I, as I happened to look towards the door, "what do I see! one of the worshippers fallen fast asleep, and actually sunk down on his cushion! He is now enjoying the benefit of a trance; or does he receive the influence of some mysterious vision?" "Alas! alas!" replied my companion, "no such thing; he has only had the

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misfortune of eating too hearty a dinner, and finds it impossible to keep his eyes open." Turning to another part of the temple, I perceived a young lady just in the same circumstances and attitude. "Strange," cried I; "can she too have over-eaten herself!" "O fie!" replied my friend, "you now grow censorious. She grow drowsy from eating too much! that would be profanation. She only sleeps now from having sat up all night at a brag party." "Turn me where I will then," says I, "I can perceive no single symptom of devotion among the worshippers, except from that old woman in the corner, who sits groaning behind the long sticks of a mourning fan; she indeed seems greatly edified with what she hears." "Aye," replied my friend, "I knew we should find some to catch you; I know her; that is the deaf lady who lives in the cloisters."

In short, the remissness of behaviour in almost all the worshippers, and some even of the guardians, struck me with surprise; I had been taught to believe that none were ever promoted to offices in the temple but men remarkable for their superior sanctity, learning, and rectitude; that there was no such thing heard of as persons being introduced into the church merely to oblige a senator, or provide for the younger branch of a noble family; I expected, as their minds were continually set upon heavenly things, to see their eyes directed there also, and hoped from their behaviour to perceive their inclinations corre-

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sponding with their duty. But I am since informed that some are appointed to preside over temples they never visit; and, while they receive all the money, are contented with letting others do all the good. Adieu.

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LETTER XLII

THE HISTORY OF CHINA MORE REPLETE WITH GREAT ACTIONS THAN THAT OF EUROPE

From Fum Hoam to Lien Chi Altangi, the discontented Wanderer by the way of Moscow.

MUST I ever continue to condemn thy perseverance, and blame that curiosity which destroys thy happiness! What yet untasted banquet, what luxury yet unknown, has rewarded thy painful adventures? Name a pleasure which thy native country could not amply procure; frame a wish that might not have been satisfied in China. Why then such toil, and such danger, in pursuit of raptures within your reach at home?

The Europeans, you will say, excel us in sciences and in arts; those sciences which bound the aspiring wish, and those arts which tend to gratify even unrestrained desire. They may perhaps outdo us in the arts of building ships, casting cannons, or measuring mountains; but are they superior in the greatest of all arts, the art of governing kingdoms and ourselves?

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When I compare the history of China with that of Europe, how do I exult in being a native of that kingdom which derives its original from the sun. Upon opening the Chinese history, I there behold an ancient extended empire, established by laws which nature and reason seem to have dictated. The duty of children to their parents, a duty which nature implants in every breast, forms the strength of that government which has subsisted for time immemorial.[1] Filial obedience is the first and greatest requisite of a state: by this we become good subjects to our emperors, capable of behaving with just subordination to our superiors, and grateful dependants on heaven; by this we become fonder of marriage, in order to be capable of exacting obedience from others in our turn; by this we become good magistrates, for early submission is the truest lesson to those who would learn to rule. By this the whole state may be said to resemble one family, of which the emperor is the protector, father, and friend.

In this happy region, sequestered from the rest of mankind, I see a succession of princes who in

[1] "The vital and universally operating principle of the Chinese government is the duty of submission to parental authority, whether vested in the parents themselves, or in their representatives, and which, although usually described under the pleasing appellation of filial piety, is much more properly to be considered as a general rule of action than as the expression of any particular sentiment of affection. It is inculcated with the greatest force in the writings of the first of their philosophers and legislators; it has survived each successive dynasty; and it continues to this day powerfully enforced both by positive laws and by public opinion."—Sir George Staunton.

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general considered themselves as the fathers of their people; a race of philosophers who bravely combated idolatry, prejudice, and tyranny, at the expense of their private happiness and immediate reputation. Whenever an usurper or a tyrant intruded into the administration, how have all the good and great been united against him! Can European history produce an instance like that of the twelve mandarins, who all resolved to apprise the vicious emperor Tisiang of the irregularity of his conduct? He who first undertook the dangerous task was cut in two by the emperor's order; the second was ordered to be tormented, and then put to a cruel death; the third undertook the task with intrepidity, and was instantly stabbed by the tyrant's hand: in this manner they all suffered, except one. But, not to be turned from his purpose, the brave survivor, entering the palace with the instruments of torture in his hand, "Here," cried he, addressing himself to the throne, "here, O Tisiang, are the marks your faithful subjects receive for their loyalty; I am wearied with serving a tyrant, and now come for my reward." The emperor, struck with his intrepidity, instantly forgave the boldness of his conduct, and reformed his own. What European annals can boast of a tyrant thus reclaimed to lenity?

When five brethren had set upon the great emperor Ginsong alone, with his sabre he slew four of them; he was struggling with the fifth

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when his guards, coming up, were going to cut the conspirator into a thousand pieces. "No, no," cried the emperor, with a calm and placid countenance, "of all his brothers he is the only one remaining; at least let one of the family be suffered to live, that his aged parents may have somebody left to feed and comfort them."[1]

When Haitong, the last emperor of the house of Ming, saw himself besieged in his own city by the usurper, he was resolved to issue from his palace with six hundred of his guards, and give the enemy battle; but they forsook him. Being thus without hopes, and choosing death rather than to fall alive into the hands of a rebel, he retired to his garden, conducting his little daughter, an only child, in his hand; there in a private arbour, unsheathing his sword, he stabbed the young innocent to the heart, and then despatched himself, leaving the following words written with his blood on the border of his vest: "Forsaken by my subjects, abandoned by my friends, use my body as you will, but spare, O spare my people!"[2]

[1] See Du Halde, tom. i., p. 424.

[2] "On the summit of the highest eminences were lofty trees surrounding summer-houses, and cabinets contrived for retreat and pleasure. One of these was pointed out as the last striking scene of the existence of that race of emperors who had built and beautified the whole of this magnificent palace. A man, whom fortune seemed for a while to favour, as if destined to become the head of a new dynasty in China, availed himself, towards the middle of the last century, of the weakness and luxury of the court, and of that indolence which, more than even luxury, had brought the former dynasties to ruin; with an army of Chinese, first collected under the hope

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An empire which has thus continued invariably the same for such a long succession of ages; which, though at last conquered by the Tartars, still preserves its ancient laws and learning, and may more properly be said to annex the dominions of Tartary to its empire than to admit a foreign conqueror, an empire as large as Europe, governed by one law, acknowledging subjection to one prince, and experiencing but one revolution of any continuance in the space of four thousand years—this is something so peculiarly great that I am naturally led to despise all other nations on the comparison. Here we see no religious persecutions, no enmity between mankind, for difference in opinion. The disciples of Lao-keun, the idolatrous sectaries of Fohi, and the philosophical children of Confucius only strive to show by their actions the truth of their doctrines.

Now turn from this happy peaceful scene to Europe, the theatre of intrigue, avarice, and ambition. How many revolutions does it not experience in the compass even of one age! and to what do these revolutions tend but the destruction of thousands? Every great event is

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of bringing about better times, and kept together afterwards by the tempting bait of plunder, he marched to the gates of Pekin. The ill-fated monarch, too slightly supported, and possessed of too little energy to resist, but with sentiments too elevated to brook submission to an enemy who had been his subject, and determining to save his offspring from the danger of dishonour, stabbed his only daughter, and put an end to his own life with a cord, in one of those edifices above-mentioned, which had been erected for far other purposes."—MACARTNEY, *Embassy*, vol. ii., p. 121.

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replete with some new calamity. The seasons of serenity are passed over in silence; their histories seem to speak only of the storm.

There we see the Romans extending their power over barbarous nations, and in turn becoming a prey to those whom they had conquered. We see those barbarians, when become Christians, engaged in continual war with the followers of Mahomet; or, more dreadful still, destroying each other. We see councils in the earlier ages authorising every iniquity; crusades spreading desolation in the country left, as well as that to be conquered; excommunications freeing subjects from natural allegiance, and persuading to sedition; blood flowing in the fields and on scaffolds; tortures used as arguments to convince the recusant; to heighten the horror of the piece, behold it shaded with wars, rebellions, treasons, plots, politics, and poison.

And what advantage has any country of Europe obtained from such calamities? Scarce any. Their dissensions for more than a thousand years served to make each other unhappy but have enriched none. All the great nations still nearly preserve their ancient limits; none have been able to subdue the other, and so terminate the dispute. France, in spite of the conquests of Edward the Third and Henry the Fifth, notwithstanding the efforts of Charles the Fifth and Philip the Second, still remains within its ancient limits. Spain, Germany, Great Britain, Poland, the states of the north, are nearly still the same. What effect,

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then, has the blood of so many thousands, the destruction of so many cities, produced? Nothing either great or considerable. The Christian princes have lost indeed much from the enemies of Christendom, but they have gained nothing from each other. Their princes, because they preferred ambition to justice, deserve the character of enemies to mankind; and their priests, by neglecting morality for opinion, have mistaken the interests of society.

On whatever side we regard the history of Europe, we shall perceive it to be a tissue of crimes, follies, and misfortunes; of politics without design and wars without consequence; in this long list of human infirmity a great character or a shining virtue may sometimes happen to arise, as we often meet a cottage or a cultivated spot in the most hideous wilderness. But for an Alfred, an Alphonso, a Frederic, or one Alexander the Third, we meet a thousand princes who have disgraced humanity.

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LETTER XLIII

AN APOSTROPHE ON THE SUPPOSED DEATH OF VOLTAIRE

From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first president of the Ceremonial Academy at Pekin in China

WE have just received accounts here that Voltaire, the poet and philosopher of Europe, is dead.[1] He is now beyond the reach of the thousand enemies who, while living, degraded his writings and branded his character. Scarce a page of his latter productions that does not betray the agonies of a heart bleeding under the scourge of unmerited reproach. Happy, therefore, at last in escaping from calumny, happy in leaving a world that was unworthy of him and his writings!

Let others, my friend, bestrew the hearses of the great with panegyric; but such a loss as the world has now suffered affects me with stronger emotions. When a philosopher dies, I consider myself as losing a patron, an instructor, and a

[1] The account proved untrue. Voltaire died on May 30, 1778.

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friend. I consider the world as losing one who might serve to console her amidst the desolations of war and ambition. Nature every day produces in abundance men capable of filling all the requisite duties of authority; but she is niggard in the birth of an exalted mind, scarcely producing in a century a single genius to bless and enlighten a degenerate age. Prodigal in the production of kings, governors, mandarins, chams, and courtiers, she seems to have forgotten, for more than three thousand years, the manner in which she once formed the brain of a Confucius; and well it is she has forgotten, when a bad world gave him so very bad a reception.

Whence, my friend, this malevolence which has ever pursued the great even to the tomb? whence this more than fiend-like disposition of embittering the lives of those who would make us more wise and more happy?

When I cast my eye over the fates of several philosophers, who have at different periods enlightened mankind, I must confess it inspires me with the most degrading reflections on humanity. When I read of the stripes of Mencius, the tortures of Tchin, the bowl of Socrates, and the bath of Seneca; when I hear of the persecutions of Dante, the imprisonment of Galileo, the indignities suffered by Montaigne, the banishment of Cartesius, the infamy of Bacon, and that even Locke himself escaped not without reproach—when I think on such subjects, I hesitate whether most to

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blame the ignorance or the villainy of my fellow-creatures.

Should you look for the character of Voltaire among the journalists and illiterate writers of the age, you will there find him characterised as a monster, with a head turned to wisdom and an heart inclining to vice; the powers of his mind and the baseness of his principles forming a detestable contrast. But seek for his character among writers like himself, and you find him very differently described. You perceive him, in their accounts, possessed of good-nature, humanity, greatness of soul, fortitude, and almost every virtue: in this description, those who might be supposed best acquainted with his character are unanimous. The royal Prussian,[1] d'Argens,[2] Diderot,[3] d'Alembert, and Fontenelle, conspire in drawing the picture, in describing the friend of man and the patron of every rising genius.

An inflexible perseverance in what he thought was right, and a generous detestation of flattery, formed the groundwork of this great man's character. From these principles many strong virtues and few faults arose: as he was warm in his friendship, and severe in his resentment, all that mention him seem possessed of the same qualities, and speak of him with rapture or detestation. A person of his eminence can have few indifferent as to his

[1] Philosophe Sans Souci.—GOLDSMITH.
[2] Let. Chin.—GOLDSMITH. [3] Encycloped.—GOLDSMITH.

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character; every reader must be an enemy or an admirer.

This poet began the course of glory so early as the age of eighteen, and even then was author of a tragedy[1] which deserved applause. Possessed of a small patrimony, he preserved his independence in an age of venality, and supported the dignity of learning, by teaching his contemporary writers to live like him, above the favours of the great. He was banished his native country for a satire upon the royal concubine. He had accepted the place of historian to the French king, but refused to keep it when he found it was presented only in order that he should be the first flatterer of the state.

The great Prussian received him as an ornament to his kingdom, and had sense enough to value his friendship, and profit by his instructions. In this court he continued, till an intrigue, with which the world seems hitherto unacquainted, obliged him to quit that country. His own happiness, the happiness of the monarch, of his sister, of a part of the court, rendered his departure necessary.

Tired at length of courts, and all the follies of the great, he retired to Switzerland, a country of liberty, where he enjoyed tranquillity and the muse. Here, though without any taste for magnificence himself, he usually entertained at his table the learned and polite of Europe, who were attracted

[1] *Amulius et Numitor*, written before Voltaire had completed his thirteenth year.

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by a desire of seeing a person from whom they had received so much satisfaction. The entertainment was conducted with the utmost elegance, and the conversation was that of philosophers. Every country that at once united liberty and science were his peculiar favourites. The being an Englishman was to him a character that claimed admiration and respect.

Between Voltaire and the disciples of Confucius there are many differences; however, being of a different opinion does not in the least diminish my esteem: I am not displeased with my brother because he happens to ask our father for favours in a different manner from me. Let his errors rest in peace, his excellencies deserve admiration; let me with the wise admire his wisdom; let the envious and the ignorant ridicule his foibles; the folly of others is ever most ridiculous to those who are themselves most foolish. Adieu.

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LETTER XLIV

WISDOM AND PRECEPT MAY LESSEN OUR MISERIES BUT CAN NEVER INCREASE OUR POSITIVE SATISFACTIONS

From Lien Chi Altangi to Hingpo, a Slave in Persia.

IT is impossible to form a philosophic system of happiness which is adapted to every condition in life, since every person who travels in this great pursuit takes a separate road. The differing colours which suit different complexions are not more various than the different pleasures appropriated to particular minds. The various sects who have pretended to give lessons to instruct men in happiness have described their own particular sensations without considering ours, have only loaded their disciples with constraint, without adding to their real felicity.

If I find pleasure in dancing, how ridiculous would it be in me to prescribe such an amusement for the entertainment of a cripple; should he, on the other hand, place his chief delight in painting, yet would he be absurd in recommending the same

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relish to one who had lost the power of distinguishing colours. General directions are, therefore, commonly useless; and to be particular would exhaust volumes, since each individual may require a particular system of precepts to direct his choice.

Every mind seems capable of entertaining a certain quantity of happiness, which no institutions can increase, no circumstances alter, and entirely independent of fortune. Let any man compare his present fortune with the past, and he will probably find himself, upon the whole, neither better nor worse than formerly.

Gratified ambition, or irreparable calamity, may produce transient sensations of pleasure or distress. Those storms may discompose in proportion as they are strong, or the mind is pliant to their expression. But the soul, though at first lifted up by the event, is every day operated upon with diminished influence, and at length subsides into the level of its usual tranquillity. Should some unexpected turn of fortune take thee from fetters and place thee on a throne, exultation would be natural upon the change; but the temper, like the face, would soon resume its native serenity.

Every wish, therefore, which leads us to expect happiness somewhere else but where we are, every institution which teaches us that we should be better by being possessed of something new, which promises to lift us a step higher than we are, only lays a foundation for uneasiness, because it con-

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tracts debts which it cannot repay; it calls that a good which, when we have found it, will, in fact, add nothing to our happiness.

To enjoy the present, without regret for the past or solicitude for the future, has been the advice rather of poets than philosophers. And yet the precept seems more rational than is generally imagined. It is the only general precept, respecting the pursuit of happiness, that can be applied with propriety to every condition of life. The man of pleasure, the man of business, and the philosopher are equally interested in its disquisition. If we do not find happiness in the present moment, in what shall we find it? Either in reflecting on the past, or prognosticating the future. But let us see how these are capable of producing satisfaction.

A remembrance of what is past, and an anticipation of what is to come, seem to be the two faculties by which man differs most from other animals. Though brutes enjoy them in a limited degree, yet their whole life seems taken up in the present, regardless of the past and the future. Man, on the contrary, endeavours to derive his happiness, and experiences most of his miseries, from these two sources.

Is this superiority of reflection a prerogative of which we should boast, and for which we should thank nature, or is it a misfortune of which we should complain and be humble? Either from the abuse, or from the nature of things, it certainly makes our condition more miserable.

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Had we a privilege of calling up, by the power of memory, only such passages as were pleasing, unmixed with such as were disagreeable, we might then excite at pleasure an ideal happiness, perhaps more poignant than actual sensation. But this is not the case: the past is never represented without some disagreeable circumstance which tarnishes all its beauty; the remembrance of an evil carries in it nothing agreeable, and to remember a good is always accompanied with regret. Thus we lose more than we gain by remembrance.

And we shall find our expectation of the future to be a gift more distressful even than the former. To fear an approaching evil is certainly a most disagreeable sensation; and in expecting an approaching good we experience the inquietude of wanting actual possession.

Thus, whichever way we look, the prospect is disagreeable. Behind, we have left pleasures we shall never more enjoy, and therefore regret; and before, we see pleasures which we languish to possess, and we are consequently uneasy till we possess them. Was there any method of seizing the present unembittered by such reflections, then would our state be tolerably easy.

This, indeed, is the endeavour of all mankind, who, untutored by philosophy, pursue as much as they can a life of amusement and dissipation. Every rank in life, and every size of understanding, seem to follow this alone; or not pursuing it, deviates from happiness. The man of pleasure pur-

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sues dissipation by profession; the man of business pursues it not less, as every voluntary labour he undergoes is only dissipation in disguise. The philosopher himself, even while he reasons upon the subject, does it unknowingly, with a view to dissipating the thoughts of what he was, or what he must be.

The subject, therefore, comes to this: Which is the most perfect sort of dissipation—pleasure, business, or philosophy? which best serves to exclude those uneasy sensations which memory or anticipation produce?

The enthusiasm of pleasure charms only by intervals: the highest rapture lasts only for a moment; and all the senses seem so combined as to be soon tired into languor by the gratification of any one of them. It is only among the poets we hear of men changing to one delight when satiated with another. In nature it is very different; the glutton, when sated with the full meal, is unqualified to feel the real pleasure of drinking; the drunkard in turn finds few of those transports which lovers boast in enjoyment; and the lover, when cloyed, finds a diminution of every other appetite. Thus, after a full indulgence of any one sense, the man of pleasure finds languor in all, is placed in a chasm between past and expected enjoyment, perceives an interval which must be filled up. The present can give no satisfaction, because he has already robbed it of every charm; a mind thus left without immediate employment naturally recurs

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to the past or future; the reflector finds that he was happy, and knows that he cannot be so now; he sees that he may yet be happy, and wishes the hour was come: thus every period of his continuance is miserable, except that very short one of immediate gratification. Instead of a life of dissipation none has more frequent conversations with disagreeable *self* than he. His enthusiasms are but few and transient; his appetites, like angry creditors, continually making fruitless demands for what he is unable to pay, and the greater his former pleasure the more impatient his expectations. A life of pleasure is therefore the most unpleasing life in the world.

Habit has rendered the man of business more cool in his desires; he finds less regret for past pleasures, and less solicitude for those to come. The life he now leads, though tainted in some measure with hope, is yet not afflicted so strongly with regret, and is less divided between short-lived rapture and lasting anguish. The pleasures he has enjoyed are not so vivid, and those he has to expect cannot consequently create so much anxiety.

The philosopher, who extends his regard to all mankind, must have a still smaller concern for what has already affected or may hereafter affect himself: the concerns of others make his whole study, and that study is his pleasure; and this pleasure is continuing in its nature, because it can be changed at will, leaving but few of these anxious intervals which are employed in remembrance

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or anticipation. The philosopher by this means leads a life of almost continued dissipation; and reflection, which makes the uneasiness and misery of others, serves as a companion and instructor to him.

In a word, positive happiness is constitutional, and incapable of increase; misery is artificial, and generally proceeds from our folly. Philosophy can add to our happiness in no other manner but by diminishing our misery: it should not pretend to increase our present stock, but make us economists of what we are possessed of. The great source of calamity lies in regret or anticipation; he, therefore, is most wise who thinks of the present alone, regardless of the past or the future. This is impossible to the man of pleasure, it is difficult to the man of business, and is in some measure attainable by the philosopher. Happy were we all born philosophers—all born with a talent of thus dissipating our own cares by spreading them upon all mankind! Adieu.

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LETTER XLV

THE ARDOUR OF THE PEOPLE OF LONDON IN RUNNING AFTER SIGHTS AND MONSTERS

From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first president of the Ceremonial Academy at Pekin in China

THOUGH the frequent invitations I receive from men of distinction here might excite the vanity of some, I am quite mortified, however, when I consider the motives that inspire their civility. I am sent for, not to be treated as a friend, but to satisfy curiosity; not to be entertained, so much as wondered at; the same earnestness which excites them to see a Chinese would have made them equally proud of a visit from the rhinoceros.

From the highest to the lowest, this people seem fond of sights and monsters. I am told of a person here who gets a very comfortable livelihood by making wonders, and then selling or showing them to the people for money; no matter how insignificant they were in the beginning, by locking them up close, and showing for money, they soon become prodigies. His first essay in this way was to

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exhibit himself as a waxwork figure behind a glass door at a puppet show. Thus, keeping the spectators at a proper distance, and having his head adorned with a copper crown, he looked "extremely natural, and very like the life itself." He continued this exhibition with success, till an involuntary fit of sneezing brought him to life before all the spectators, and consequently rendered him for that time as entirely useless as the peaceable inhabitant of a catacomb.

Determined to act the statue no more, he next levied contributions under the figure of an Indian king; and by painting his face, and counterfeiting the savage howl, he frighted several ladies and children with amazing success. In this manner, therefore, he might have lived very comfortably, had he not been arrested for a debt that was contracted when he was the figure in waxwork; thus his face underwent an involuntary ablution, and he found himself reduced to his primitive complexion and indigence.

After some time, being freed from gaol, he was now grown wiser, and, instead of making himself a wonder, was resolved only to make wonders. He learned the art of pasting up mummies, was never at a loss for an artificial *lusus naturæ;* nay, it has been reported, that he has sold seven petrified lobsters of his own manufacture, to a noted collector of rarities; but this the learned Cracovius Putridus has undertaken to refute in a very elaborate dissertation.

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His last wonder was nothing more than an halter; yet by this halter he gained more than by all his former exhibitions. The people, it seems, had got it in their heads that a certain noble criminal[1] was to be hanged with a silken rope. Now, there was nothing they so much desired to see as this very rope; and he was resolved to gratify their curiosity. He therefore got one made, not only of silk, but, to render it the more striking, several threads of gold were intermixed. The people paid their money only to see silk, but were highly satisfied when they found it was mixed with gold into the bargain. It is scarce necessary to mention that the projector sold his silken rope for almost what it had cost him as soon as the criminal was known to be hanged in hempen materials.

By their fondness of sights one would be apt to imagine that, instead of desiring to see things as they should be, they are rather solicitous of seeing them as they ought not to be. A cat with four legs is disregarded, though never so useful; but if it has but two, and is consequently incapable of catching mice, it is reckoned inestimable, and every man of taste is ready to raise the auction. A man though in his person faultless as an aerial genius might starve; but if stuck over with hideous warts like a porcupine, his fortune is made forever, and

[1] Earl Ferrers: See Letter xxxviii., p. 221. He was hanged in the dress he wore at his wedding. "The executioners fought for the rope with which he was hanged, and the one who lost it cried." —Horace Walpole *to Sir Horace Mann*, vol. iii., p. 360.

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he may propagate the breed with impunity and applause.

A good woman in my neighbourhood, who was bred a habit-maker, though she handled her needle tolerably well, could scarcely get employment. But being obliged, by an accident, to have both her hands cut off from the elbows, what would in another country have been her ruin made her fortune here: she now was thought more fit for trade than before; business flowed in apace, and all people paid for seeing the mantua-maker who wrought without hands.

A gentleman showing me his collection of pictures stopped at one with peculiar admiration: "There," cries he, "is an estimable piece." I gazed at the picture for some time, but could see none of those graces with which he seemed enraptured; it appeared to me the most paltry piece of the whole collection. I therefore demanded where those beauties lay, of which I was yet insensible. "Sir," cries he, "the merit does not consist in the piece, but in the manner in which it was done. The painter drew the whole with his foot, and held the pencil between his toes. I bought it at a very great price; for peculiar merit should ever be rewarded."

But these people are not more fond of wonders than liberal in rewarding those who show them. From the wonderful dog of knowledge, at present under the patronage of the nobility, down to the man with the box, who professes to show "the most imitation of nature that was ever seen," they

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all live in luxury. A singing-woman shall collect subscriptions in her own coach and six; a fellow shall make a fortune by tossing a straw from his toe to his nose; one in particular has found that eating fire was the most ready way to live; and another, who jingles several bells fixed to his cap, is the only man that I know of who has received emolument from the labours of his head.

A young author, a man of good-nature and learning, was complaining to me some nights ago of this misplaced generosity of the times. "Here," says he, "have I spent part of my youth in attempting to instruct and amuse my fellow-creatures, and all my reward has been solitude, poverty, and reproach; while a fellow possessed of even the smallest share of fiddling merit, or who has perhaps learned to whistle double, is rewarded, applauded, and caressed!" "Prythee, young man," says I to him, "are you ignorant that in so large a city as this it is better to be an amusing than a useful member of society? Can you leap up, and touch your feet four times before you come to the ground?" "No, sir." "Can you pimp for a man of quality?" "No, sir." "Can you stand upon two horses at full speed?" "No, sir." "Can you swallow a pen-knife?" "I can do none of these tricks." "Why, then," cried I, "there is no other prudent means of subsistence left but to apprise the town that you speedily intend to eat up your own nose, by subscription."

I have frequently regretted that none of our

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Eastern posture-masters or showmen have ever ventured to England. I should be pleased to see that money circulate in Asia which is now sent to Italy and France, in order to bring their vagabonds hither. Several of our tricks would undoubtedly give the English high satisfaction. Men of fashion would be greatly pleased with the postures as well as the condescension of our dancing-girls; and the ladies would equally admire the conductors of our fireworks. What an agreeable surprise would it be, to see a huge fellow with whiskers flash a charged blunderbuss full in a lady's face without singeing her hair or melting her pomatum! Perhaps, when the first surprise was over, she might then grow familiar with danger; and the ladies might vie with each other in standing fire with intrepidity.

But of all the wonders of the East, the most useful, and I should fancy the most pleasing, would be the looking-glass of Lao, which reflects the mind as well as the body. It is said that the Emperor Chusi used to make his concubines dress their heads and their hearts in one of these glasses every morning: while the lady was at her toilet, he would frequently look over her shoulder; and it is recorded that, among the three hundred which composed his seraglio, not one was found whose mind was not even more beautiful than her person.

I make no doubt but a glass in this country would have the very same effect. The English ladies, concubines and all, would undoubtedly cut

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very pretty figures in so faithful a monitor. There, should we happen to peep over a lady's shoulder while dressing, we might be able to see neither gaming nor ill-nature; neither pride, debauchery, nor a love of gadding. We should find her, if any sensible defect appeared in the mind, more careful in rectifying it than plastering up the irreparable decays of the person; nay, I am even apt to fancy that ladies would find more real pleasure in this utensil in private than in any other bauble imported from China, though never so expensive or amusing.

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LETTER XLVI

THE LOOKING-GLASS OF LAO—A DREAM

To the Same

UPON finishing my last letter, I retired to rest, reflecting upon the wonders of the glass of Lao, wishing to be possessed of one here, and resolved in such case to oblige every lady with a sight of it for nothing. What fortune denied me waking, fancy supplied in a dream: the glass, I know not how, was put into my possession, and I could perceive several ladies approaching, some voluntarily, others driven forward against their wills, by a set of discontented genii, whom by intuition I knew were their husbands.

The apartment in which I was to show away was filled with several gaming tables, as if just forsaken; the candles were burnt to the socket, and the hour was five o'clock in the morning. Placed at one end of the room, which was of prodigious length, I could more easily distinguish every female figure as she marched up from the door; but guess my surprise when I could scarce perceive one blooming

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or agreeable face among the number. This, however, I attributed to the early hour, and kindly considered that the face of a lady just risen from bed ought always to find a compassionate advocate.

The first person who came up in order to view her intellectual face was a commoner's wife, who, as I afterwards found, being bred during her virginity in a pawnbroker's shop, now attempted to make up the defects of breeding and sentiment by the magnificence of her dress, and the expensiveness of her amusements. "Mr. Showman," cried she approaching, "I am told you has something to show in that there sort of magic lanthorn by which folks can see themselves on the inside: I protest, as my Lord Beetle says, I am sure it will be vastly pretty, for I have never seen anything like it before. But how: are we to strip off our clothes and be turned inside out? If so, as Lord Beetle says, I absolutely declare off; for I would not strip for the world before a man's face, and so I tells his lordship almost every night of his life." I informed the lady that I would dispense with the ceremony of stripping, and immediately presented my glass to her view.

As when a first-rate beauty, after having with difficulty escaped the small-pox, revisits her favourite mirror—that mirror which had repeated the flattery of every lover, and even added force to the compliment—expecting to see what had so often given her pleasure, she no longer beholds the cherried lip, the polished forehead, and speaking

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blush, but an hateful phiz quilted into a thousand seams by the hand of deformity; grief, resentment, and rage fill her bosom by turns; she blames the fates and the stars, but most of all the unhappy glass feels her resentment: so it was with the lady in question; she had never seen her own mind before, and was now shocked at its deformity. One single look was sufficient to satisfy her curiosity. I held up the glass to her face, and she shut her eyes; no entreaties could prevail upon her to gaze once more. She was even going to snatch it from my hands, and break it in a thousand pieces. I found it was time, therefore, to dismiss her as incorrigible, and show away to the next that offered.

This was an unmarried lady, who continued in a state of virginity till thirty-six, and then admitted a lover when she despaired of an husband. No woman was louder at a revel than she, perfectly free-hearted, and almost in every respect a man; she understood ridicule to perfection, and was once known even to sally out in order to beat the watch. "Here, you, my dear, with the outlandish face," said she, addressing me, "let me take a single peep. Not that I care three damns what figure I may cut in the glass of such an old-fashioned creature; if I am allowed the beauties of the face by people of fashion, I know the world will be complaisant enough to toss me the beauties of the mind into the bargain." I held my glass before her as she desired, and must confess was

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shocked with the reflection. The lady, however, gazed for some time with the utmost complacency; and at last, turning to me with the most satisfied smile, said she never could think she had been half so handsome.

Upon her dismission, a lady of distinction was reluctantly hauled along to the glass by her husband. In bringing her forward, as he came first to the glass himself, his mind appeared tinctured with immoderate jealousy, and I was going to reproach him for using her with such severity; but when the lady came to present herself, I immediately retracted; for, alas! it was seen that he had but too much reason for his suspicions.

The next was a lady who usually teased all her acquaintance in desiring to be told of her faults, and then never mended any. Upon approaching the glass I could readily perceive vanity, affectation, and some other ill-looking blots on her mind; wherefore, by my advice, she immediately set about mending. But I could easily find she was not earnest in the work; for as she repaired them on one side, they generally broke out on another. Thus, after three or four attempts, she began to make the ordinary use of the glass in settling her hair.

The company now made room for a woman of learning, who approached with a slow pace and a solemn countenance, which, for her own sake, I could wish had been cleaner. "Sir," cried the lady, flourishing her hand, which held a pinch of

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snuff, "I shall be enraptured by having presented to my view a mind with which I have so long studied to be acquainted; but, in order to give the sex a proper example, I must insist that all the company may be permitted to look over my shoulder." I bowed assent and, presenting the glass, showed the lady a mind by no means so fair as she had expected to see. Ill-nature, ill-placed pride, and spleen were too legible to be mistaken. Nothing could be more amusing than the mirth of her female companions who had looked over. They had hated her from the beginning, and now the apartment echoed with an universal laugh. Nothing but a fortitude like hers could have withstood their raillery. She stood it, however; and when the burst was exhausted, with great tranquillity she assured the company that the whole was a *deceptio visûs*, and that she was too well acquainted with her own mind to believe any false representations from another. Thus saying, she retired with a sullen satisfaction, resolved not to mend her faults, but to write a criticism on the mental reflector.

I must own, by this time I began myself to suspect the fidelity of my mirror; for, as the ladies appeared at least to have the merit of rising early, since they were up at five, I was amazed to find nothing of this good quality pictured upon their minds in the reflection. I was resolved, therefore, to communicate my suspicions to a lady whose intellectual countenance appeared more fair than

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any of the rest, not having above seventy-nine spots in all, besides slips and foibles. "I own, young woman," said I, "that there are some virtues upon that mind of yours, but there is still one which I do not see represented; I mean that of rising betimes in the morning: I fancy the glass false in that particular." The young lady smiled at my simplicity; and with a blush confessed that she and the whole company had been up all night gaming.

By this time all the ladies except one had seen themselves successively, and disliked the show or scolded the showman. I was resolved, however, that she who seemed to neglect herself and was neglected by the rest should take a view; and going up to a corner of the room where she still continued sitting, I presented my glass full in her face. Here it was that I exulted in my success; no blot, no stain, appeared on any part of the faithful mirror. As when the large unwritten page presents its snowy spotless bosom to the writer's hand, so appeared the glass to my view. "Here, O ye daughters of English ancestors," cried I, turn hither and behold an object worthy imitation; look upon the mirror now, and acknowledge its justice, and this woman's pre-eminence!" The ladies, obeying the summons, came up in a group, and, looking on, acknowledged there was some truth in the picture—as the person now represented had been deaf, dumb, and a fool from her cradle!

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Thus much of my dream I distinctly remember; the rest was filled with chimeras, enchanted castles, and flying dragons, as usual. As you, my dear Fum Hoam, are particularly versed in the interpretation of those midnight warnings, what pleasure should I find in your explanation! But that our distance prevents. I make no doubt, however, but that, from my description, you will very much venerate the good qualities of the English ladies in general; since dreams, you know, go always by contraries. Adieu.

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LETTER XLVII

MISERY BEST RELIEVED BY DISSIPATION

From Lien Chi Altangi to Hingpo, a Slave in Persia [1]

YOUR last letters betray a mind seemingly fond of wisdom, yet tempested up by a thousand various passions. You would fondly persuade me that my former lessons still influence your conduct, and yet your mind seems not less enslaved than your body. Knowledge, wisdom, erudition, arts, and elegance, what are they but the mere trappings of the mind if they do not serve to increase the happiness of the possessor? A mind rightly instituted in the school of philosophy acquires at once the stability of the oak and the flexibility of the osier. The truest manner of lessening our agonies is to shrink from their pressure; is to confess that we feel them.

The fortitude of European sages is but a dream; for where lies the merit in being insensible to the strokes of fortune, or in dissembling our sensibil-

[1] This letter appears to be little more than a rhapsody of sentiments from Confucius. *Vide* the Latin translation.—GOLDSMITH.

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ity? If we are insensible, that arises only from a happy constitution: that is a blessing previously granted by Heaven, and which no art can procure, no institutions improve.

If we dissemble our feelings, we only artificially endeavour to persuade others that we enjoy privileges that we actually do not possess. Thus, while we endeavour to appear happy, we feel at once all the pangs of internal misery and all the self-reproaching consciousness of endeavouring to deceive.

I know but of two sects of philosophers in the world that have endeavoured to inculcate that fortitude is but an imaginary virtue; I mean the followers of Confucius and those who profess the doctrines of Christ. All other sects teach pride under misfortunes; they alone teach humility. Night, says our Chinese philosopher, not more surely follows day, than groans and tears grow out of pain; when misfortunes therefore oppress, when tyrants threaten, it is our interest, it is our duty to fly even to dissipation for support, to seek redress from friendship, or from that best of friends who loved us into being.

Philosophers, my son, have long declaimed against the passions, as being the source of all our miseries: they are the source of all our misfortunes, I own; but they are the source of our pleasures too; and every endeavour of our lives, and all the institutions of philosophy, should tend to this—not to dissemble an absence of passion, but to repel those

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which lead to vice, by those which direct to virtue.

The soul may be compared to a field of battle, where two armies are ready every moment to encounter; not a single vice but has a more powerful opponent, and not one virtue but may be overborne by a combination of vices. Reason guides the hands of either host; nor can it subdue one passion but by the assistance of another. Thus as a bark on every side beset with storms enjoys a state of rest, so does the mind, when influenced by a just equipoise of the passions, enjoy tranquillity.

I have used such means as my little fortune would admit to procure your freedom. I have lately written to the governor of Argun to pay your ransom, though at the expense of all the wealth I brought with me from China. If we become poor, we shall at least have the pleasure of bearing poverty together; for what is fatigue or famine, when weighed against friendship and freedom! Adieu.

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LETTER XLVIII

THE ABSURDITY OF PERSONS IN HIGH STATION PURSUING EMPLOYMENTS BENEATH THEM, EXEMPLIFIED IN A FAIRY TALE

*From Lien Chi Altangi, to * * * *, Merchant in Amsterdam*

HAPPENING some days ago to call at a painter's to amuse myself in examining some pictures (I had no design to buy), it surprised me to see a young prince in the working-room, dressed in a painter's apron, and assiduously learning the trade. We instantly remembered to have seen each other; and, after the usual compliments, I stood by while he continued to paint on. As everything done by the rich is praised—as princes here, as well as in China, are never without followers—three or four persons, who had the appearance of gentlemen, were placed behind to comfort and applaud him at every stroke.

Need I tell that it struck me with very disagreeable sensations to see a youth who, by his station in life, had it in his power to be useful to thousands, thus letting his mind run to waste upon canvas,

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at the same time fancying himself improving in taste, and filling his rank with proper decorum?

As seeing an error, and attempting to redress it, are only one and the same with me, I took occasion, upon his Lordship's desiring my opinion of a Chinese scroll, intended for the frame of a picture, to assure him that a mandarin of China thought a minute acquaintance with such mechanical trifles below his dignity.

This reply raised the indignation of some, and the contempt of others. I could hear the names of Vandal, Goth, taste, polite arts, delicacy, and fire repeated in tones of ridicule or resentment. But considering that it was in vain to argue against people who had so much to say, without contradicting them I begged leave to repeat a fairy tale. This request redoubled their laughter; but, not easily abashed at the raillery of boys, I persisted, observing that it would set the absurdity of placing our affections upon trifles in the strongest point of view, and adding that it was hoped the moral would compensate for its stupidity. "For Heaven's sake," cried the great man, washing his brush in water, "let us have no morality at present; if we must have a story, let it be without any moral." I pretended not to hear; and, while he handled the brush, proceeded as follows:—

In the kingdom of Bonbobbin, which, by the Chinese annals, appears to have flourished twenty thousand years ago, there reigned a prince endowed with every accomplishment which generally

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distinguishes the sons of kings. His beauty was brighter than the sun. The sun, to which he was nearly related, would sometimes stop his course in order to look down and admire him.

His mind was not less perfect than his body: he knew all things, without having ever read; philosophers, poets, and historians submitted their works to his decision; and so penetrating was he that he could tell the merit of a book by looking on the cover. He made epic poems, tragedies, and pastorals with surprising facility; song, epigram, or rebus was all one to him, though it is observed he could never finish an acrostic. In short, the fairy who presided at his birth had endowed him with almost every perfection, or, what was just the same, his subjects were ready to acknowledge he possessed them; and, for his own part, he knew nothing to the contrary. A prince so accomplished received a name suitable to his merit; and he was called Bonbenin-bonbobbin-bonbobbinet, which signifies Enlightener of the Sun.

As he was very powerful, and yet unmarried, all the neighbouring kings earnestly sought his alliance. Each sent his daughter, dressed out in the most magnificent manner, and with the most sumptuous retinue imaginable, in order to allure the prince; so that at one time there were seen at his court not less than seven hundred foreign princesses, of exquisite sentiment and beauty, each alone sufficient to make seven hundred ordinary men happy.

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Distracted in such a variety, the generous Bonbenin, had he not been obliged by the laws of the empire to make choice of one, would very willingly have married them all, for none understood gallantry better. He spent numberless hours of solicitude in endeavouring to determine whom he should choose: one lady was possessed of every perfection, but he disliked her eyebrows; another was brighter than the morning star, but he disapproved her *fong-whang*;[1] a third did not lay white enough on her cheek; and a fourth did not sufficiently blacken her nails. At last, after numberless disappointments on the one side and the other, he made choice of the incomparable Nanhoa, queen of the scarlet dragons.

The preparation for the royal nuptials, or the envy of the disappointed ladies, needs no description; both the one and the other were as great as they could be. The beautiful princess was conducted amidst admiring multitudes to the royal couch, where, after being divested of every encumbering ornament, she was placed, in expectance of the youthful bridegroom, who did not keep her long in expectation. He came more cheerful than the morning, and printing on her lips a burning kiss, the attendants took this as a proper signal to withdraw.

Perhaps I ought to have mentioned in the beginning that, among several other qualifications, the prince was fond of collecting and breeding mice,

[1] See page 231.

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which, being an harmless pastime, none of his counsellors thought proper to dissuade him from; he therefore kept a variety of these pretty little animals in the most beautiful cages enriched with diamonds, rubies, emeralds, pearls, and other precious stones: thus he innocently spent four hours each day in contemplating their innocent little pastimes.

But to proceed. The prince and princess are now in bed; one with all the love and expectation, the other with all the modesty and fear, which is natural to suppose; both willing, yet afraid to begin: when the prince, happening to look towards the outside of the bed, perceived one of the most beautiful animals in the world, a white mouse with green eyes, playing about the floor, and performing an hundred pretty tricks. He was already master of blue mice, red mice, and even white mice with yellow eyes; but a white mouse with green eyes was what he had long endeavoured to possess: wherefore, leaping from bed with the utmost impatience and agility, the youthful prince attempted to seize the little charmer, but it was fled in a moment; for, alas! the mouse was sent by a discontented princess, and was itself a fairy.

It is impossible to describe the agony of the prince upon this occasion; he sought round and round every part of the room; even the bed where the princess lay was not exempt from the inquiry: he turned the princess on one side and the other, stripped her quite naked, but no mouse was to be

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found. The princess herself was kind enough to assist, but still to no purpose.

"Alas," cried the young prince in an agony, "how unhappy am I to be thus disappointed! never, sure, was so beautiful an animal seen! I would give half my kingdom, and my princess, to him that would find it." The princess, though not much pleased with the latter part of his offer, endeavoured to comfort him as well as she could: she let him know that he had an hundred mice already, which ought to be at least sufficient to satisfy any philosopher like him. Though none of them had green eyes, yet he should learn to thank Heaven that they had eyes. She told him (for she was a profound moralist), that incurable evils must be borne, and that useless lamentations were vain, and that man was born to misfortunes; she even entreated him to return to bed, and she would endeavour to lull him on her bosom to repose: but still the prince continued inconsolable; and regarding her with a stern air, for which his family was remarkable, he vowed never to sleep in the royal palace, or indulge himself in the innocent pleasures of matrimony, till he had found the white mouse with the green eyes.

"Prythee, Colonel Leech," cried his Lordship, interrupting me, "how do you like that nose? don't you think there is something of the manner of Rembrandt in it?—A prince in all this agony for a white mouse, O ridiculous! Don't you think, Major Vampyre, that eyebrow stippled very pret-

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tily?—but pray, what are the green eyes to the purpose, except to amuse children? I would give a thousand guineas to lay on the colouring of this cheek more smoothly. But I ask pardon! pray, Sir, proceed."

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LETTER XLIX

THE FAIRY TALE CONTINUED

From the Same

KINGS, continued I, at that time were different from what they are now; they then never engaged their word for anything which they did not rigorously intend to perform. This was the case of Bonbenin, who continued all night to lament his misfortunes to the princess, who echoed groan for groan. When morning came, he published an edict, offering half his kingdom, and his princess, to the person who should catch and bring him the white mouse with the green eyes.

The edict was scarcely published when all the traps in the kingdom were baited with cheese: numberless mice were taken and destroyed, but still the much-wished-for mouse was not among the number. The privy council was assembled more than once to give their advice; but all their deliberations came to nothing; even though there were two complete vermin-killers and three professed rat-catchers of the number. Frequent addresses, as is usual on extraordinary occasions, were

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sent from all parts of the empire; but though these promised well, though in them he received an assurance that his faithful subjects would assist in his search with their lives and fortunes, yet, with all their loyalty, they failed when the time came that the mouse was to be caught.

The prince, therefore, was resolved to go himself in search, determined never to lie two nights in one place till he had found what he sought for. Thus, quitting his palace without attendants, he set out upon his journey, and travelled through many a desert, and crossed many a river, high over hills, and down along vales, still restless, still inquiring wherever he came; but no white mouse was to be found.

As one day, fatigued with his journey, he was shading himself from the heat of the mid-day sun, under the arching branches of a banana tree, meditating on the object of his pursuit, he perceived an old woman, hideously deformed, approaching him; by her stoop, and the wrinkles of her visage, she seemed at least five hundred years old; and the spotted toad was not more freckled than was her skin. "Ah! Prince Bonbenin-bonbobbin-bonbobbinet," cried the creature, "what has led you so many thousand miles from your own kingdom? what is it you look for, and what induces you to travel into the kingdom of Emmets?" The prince, who was excessively complaisant, told her the whole story three times over; for she was hard of hearing. "Well," says the old

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fairy, for such she was, "I promise to put you in possession of the white mouse with green eyes, and that immediately too, upon one condition." "One condition," cried the prince in a rapture, "name a thousand; I shall undergo them all with pleasure." "Nay," interrupted the old fairy, "I ask but one, and that not very mortifying neither; it is only that you instantly consent to marry me."

It is impossible to express the prince's confusion at this demand; he loved the mouse, but he detested the bride. He hesitated; he desired time to think upon the proposal; he would have been glad to consult his friends upon such an occasion. "Nay, nay," cried the odious fairy, "if you demur, I retract my promise; I do not desire to force my favours on any man. Here, you my attendants," cried she, stamping with her foot, "let my machine be driven up; Barbacela, Queen of Emmets, is not used to contemptuous treatment." She had no sooner spoken than her fiery chariot appeared in the air, drawn by two snails; and she was just going to step in, when the prince reflected that now or never was the time to be possessed of the white mouse; and, quite forgetting his lawful princess Nanhoa, falling on his knees he implored forgiveness for having rashly rejected so much beauty. This well-timed compliment instantly appeased the angry fairy. She affected an hideous leer of approbation, and, taking the young prince by the hand, conducted him to a neighbouring church, where they were married together in a moment. As soon

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as the ceremony was performed, the prince, who was to the last degree desirous of seeing his favourite mouse, reminded his bride of her promise. "To confess a truth, my prince," cried she, "I myself am that very white mouse you saw on your wedding night in the royal apartment. I now, therefore, give you the choice, whether you would have me a mouse by day and a woman by night, or a mouse by night and a woman by day." Though the prince was an excellent casuist, he was quite at a loss how to determine, but at last thought it most prudent to have recourse to a blue cat that had followed him from his own dominions, and frequently amused him with its conversation, and assisted him with its advice; in fact, this cat was no other than the faithful princess Nanhoa herself, who had shared with him all his hardships in this disguise.

By her instructions he was determined in his choice, and, returning to the old fairy, prudently observed that, as she must have been sensible he had married her only for the sake of what she had, and not for personal qualifications, he thought it would for several reasons be most convenient if she continued a woman by day and appeared a mouse by night.

The old fairy was a good deal mortified at her husband's want of gallantry, though she was reluctantly obliged to comply. The day was therefore spent in the most polite amusements: the gentlemen talked smut, the ladies laughed, and were

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angry. At last, the happy night drew near, the blue cat still stuck by the side of its master, and even followed him to the bridal apartment. Barbacela entered the chamber, wearing a train fifteen yards long, supported by porcupines, and all over beset with jewels, which served to render her more detestable. She was just stepping into bed to the prince, forgetting her promise, when he insisted upon seeing her in the shape of a mouse. She had promised, and no fairy can break her word; wherefore, assuming the figure of the most beautiful mouse in the world, she skipped and played about with an infinity of amusement. The prince, in an agony of rapture, was desirous of seeing his pretty playfellow move a slow dance about the floor to his own singing; he began to sing, and the mouse immediately to perform with the most perfect knowledge of time, and the finest grace and greatest gravity imaginable; it only began, for Nanhoa, who had long waited for the opportunity in the shape of a cat, flew upon it instantly without remorse, and, eating it up in the hundredth part of a moment, broke the charm, and then resumed her natural figure.

The prince now found that he had all along been under the power of enchantment, that his passion for the white mouse was entirely fictitious, and not the genuine complexion of his soul; he now saw that his earnestness after mice was an illiberal amusement, and much more becoming a rat-catcher than a prince. All his meannesses now

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stared him in the face; he begged the discreet princess's pardon a hundred times. The princess very readily forgave him; and both, returning to their palace in Bonbobbin, lived very happily together, and reigned many years with all that wisdom which, by the story, they appear to have been possessed of; perfectly convinced, by their former adventures, that they who place their affections on trifles at first for amusement will find those trifles at last become their most serious concern. Adieu.

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LETTER L

AN ATTEMPT TO DEFINE WHAT IS MEANT BY ENGLISH LIBERTY

From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first president of the Cerimonial Academy at Pekin in China

ASK an Englishman what nation in the world enjoys most freedom, and he immediately answers his own. Ask him in what that freedom principally consists, and he is instantly silent. This happy pre-eminence does not arise from the people's enjoying a larger share in legislation than elsewhere, for in this particular several states in Europe excel them; nor does it arise from a greater exemption from taxes, for few countries pay more; it does not proceed from their being restrained by fewer laws, for no people are burthened with so many; nor does it particularly consist in the security of their property, for property is pretty well secured in every polite state of Europe.

How then are the English more free—for more free they certainly are—than the people of any other country, or under any other form of government whatever? Their freedom consists in their

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enjoying all the advantages of democracy, with this superior prerogative borrowed from monarchy, that the severity of their laws may be relaxed without endangering the constitution.

In a monarchical state, in which the constitution is strongest, the laws may be relaxed without danger; for, though the people should be unanimous in the breach of any one in particular, yet still there is an effective power superior to the people, capable of enforcing obedience, whenever it may be proper to inculcate the law either towards the support or welfare of the community.

But in all those governments where laws derive their sanction from the people alone, transgressions cannot be overlooked without bringing the constitution into danger. They who transgress the law in such a case are those who prescribe it, by which means it loses not only its influence but its sanction. In every republic the laws must be strong, because the constitution is feeble; they must resemble an Asiatic husband, who is justly jealous, because he knows himself impotent. Thus in Holland, Switzerland, and Genoa, new laws are not frequently enacted, but the old ones are observed with unremitting severity. In such republics, therefore, the people are slaves to laws of their own making little less than in unmixed monarchies, where they are slaves to the will of one subject to frailties like themselves.

In England, from a variety of happy accidents, their constitution is just strong enough, or, if you

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will, monarchical enough, to permit a relaxation of the severity of laws, and yet those laws still to remain sufficiently strong to govern the people. This is the most perfect state of civil liberty of which we can form any idea: here we see a greater number of laws than in any other country, while the people at the same time obey only such as are immediately conducive to the interests of society; several are unnoticed, many unknown; some kept to be revived and enforced upon proper occasions, others left to grow obsolete, even without the necessity of abrogation.

There is scarce an Englishman who does not almost every day of his life offend with impunity against some express law, and for which, in a certain conjuncture of circumstances, he would not receive punishment. Gaming-houses, preaching at prohibited places, assembled crowds, nocturnal amusements, public shows, and an hundred other instances are forbid and frequented. These prohibitions are useful; though it be prudent in their magistrates, and happy for the people, that they are not enforced, and none but the venal or mercenary attempt to enforce them.

The law in this case, like an indulgent parent, still keeps the rod, though the child is seldom corrected. Were those pardoned offences to rise into enormity, were they likely to obstruct the happiness of society, or endanger the state, it is then that justice would resume her terrors, and punish those faults she had so often overlooked with indul-

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gence. It is to this ductility of the laws that an Englishman owes the freedom he enjoys superior to others in a more popular government; every step, therefore, the constitution takes towards a democratic form, every diminution of the legal authority, is, in fact, a diminution of the subject's freedom; but every attempt to render the government more popular not only impairs natural liberty, but even will at last dissolve the political constitution.

Every popular government seems calculated to last only for a time; it grows rigid with age; new laws are multiplying, and the old continue in force; the subjects are oppressed, burthened with a multiplicity of legal injunctions; there are none from whom to expect redress, and nothing but a strong convulsion in the state can vindicate them into former liberty: thus, the people of Rome, a few great ones excepted, found more real freedom under their emperors, though tyrants, than they had experienced in the old age of the commonwealth, in which their laws were become numerous and painful, in which new laws were every day enacting, and the old ones executed with rigour. They even refused to be reinstated in their former prerogatives, upon an offer made them to this purpose; for they actually found emperors the only means of softening the rigours of their constitution.

The constitution of England is at present possessed of the strength of its native oak, and the flexibility of the bending tamarisk; but should the

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people at any time, with a mistaken zeal, pant after an imaginary freedom, and fancy that abridging monarchy was increasing their privileges, they would be very much mistaken, since every jewel plucked from the crown of majesty would only be made use of as a bribe to corruption; it might enrich the few who shared it among them, but would in fact impoverish the public life.

As the Roman senators, by slow and imperceptible degrees, became masters of the people, yet still flattered them with a show of freedom, while themselves only were free,[1] so is it possible for a body of men, while they stand up for privileges, to grow into an exuberance of power themselves, and the public become actually dependent, while some of its individuals only governed.

If then, my friend, there should in this country ever be on the throne a king who, through goodnature or age, should give up the smallest part of his prerogative to the people; if there should come a minister of merit and popularity—but I have room for no more. Adieu.

[1] "But when contending chiefs blockade the throne,
Contracting regal power to stretch their own;
When I behold a factious band agree
To call it freedom when themselves are free," etc.
The Traveller.

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LETTER LI

A BOOKSELLER'S VISIT TO THE CHINESE

To the Same

AS I was yesterday seated at breakfast over a pensive dish of tea, my meditations were interrupted by my old friend and companion, who introduced a stranger, dressed pretty much like himself. The gentleman made several apologies for his visit, begged of me to impute his intrusion to the sincerity of his respect, and the warmth of his curiosity.

As I am very suspicious of my company when I find them very civil without any apparent reason, I answered the stranger's caresses at first with reserve; which my friend perceiving, instantly let me into my visitant's trade and character, asking Mr. Fudge whether he had lately published anything new. I now conjectured that my guest was no other than a bookseller, and his answer confirmed my suspicions.

"Excuse me, Sir," says he, "it is not the season; books have their time as well as cucumbers. I would no more bring out a new work in summer

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than I would sell pork in the dog-days. Nothing in my way goes off in summer, except very light goods indeed. A review, a magazine, or a sessions paper might amuse a summer reader; but all our stock of value we reserve for a spring and winter trade." "I must confess, Sir," says I, "a curiosity to know what you call a valuable stock, which can only bear a winter perusal." "Sir," replied the bookseller, "it is not my way to cry up my own goods; but, without exaggeration, I will venture to show with any of the trade: my books at least have the peculiar advantage of being always new; and it is my way to clear off my old to the trunk-makers every season. I have ten new title-pages now about me, which only want books to be added to make them the finest things in nature. Others may pretend to direct the vulgar, but that is not my way; I always let the vulgar direct me; wherever popular clamour arises, I always echo the million. For instance, should the people in general say that such a man is a rogue, I instantly give orders to set him down in print a villain; thus every man buys the book, not to learn new sentiments, but to have the pleasure of seeing his own reflected." "But, Sir," interrupted I, "you speak as if you yourself wrote the books you publish; may I be so bold as to ask a sight of some of those intended publications which are shortly to surprise the world?" "As to that, Sir," replied the talkative bookseller, "I only draw out the plans myself; and though I am very cautious of commu-

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nicating them to any, yet, as in the end I have a favour to ask, you shall see a few of them. Here, Sir, here they are, diamonds of the first water, I assure you. *Imprimis*, a translation of several medical precepts, for the use of such physicians as do not understand Latin. *Item*, the young clergyman's art of placing patches regularly, with a dissertation on the different manner of smiling without distorting the face. *Item*, the whole art of love made perfectly easy, by a broker of 'Change Alley. *Item*, the proper manner of cutting black-lead pencils, and making crayons; by the Right Hon. the Earl of * * *. *Item*, the muster-master general, or the review of reviews—" "Sir," cried I, interrupting him, "my curiosity with regard to title-pages is satisfied. I should be glad to see some longer manuscript, a history, or an epic poem. "Bless me," cries the man of industry, "now you speak of an epic poem, you shall see an excellent farce. Here it is; dip into it where you will, it will be found replete with true modern humour. Strokes, Sir—it is filled with strokes of wit and satire in every line." "Do you call these dashes of the pen strokes?" replied I, "for I must confess I can see no other?" "And pray, Sir," returned he, "what do you call them? Do you see anything good now-a-days that is not filled with strokes—and dashes?——Sir, a well-placed dash makes half the wit of our writers of modern humour."[1] I

[1] "A prologue, interdash'd with many a stroke—
An art contriv'd to advertise a joke,

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bought last season a piece that had no other merit upon earth than nine hundred and ninety-five breaks, seventy-two ha-ha's,[1] three good things, and a garter. And yet it played off, and bounced, and cracked, and made more sport than a fire-work." "I fancy then, Sir, you were a considerable gainer?" "It must be owned the piece did pay, but, upon the whole, I cannot much boast of last winter's success; I gained by two murders, but then I lost by an ill-timed charity sermon. I was a considerable sufferer by my *Direct Road to an Estate*, but the *Infernal Guide* brought me up again. Ah, Sir, that was a piece touched off by the hand of a master, filled with good things from one end to the other. The author had nothing but the jest in view—no dull moral lurking beneath, nor ill-natured satire to sour the reader's good-humour; he wisely considered that moral and humour at the same time were quite overdoing the businesss." "To what purpose was the book then published?" cried I. "Sir, the book was published in order to be sold; and no book sold better, except the criticisms upon it, which came out soon after: of all kinds of writings that goes off best at

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So that the jest is clearly to be seen,
Not in the words—but in the gap between."
Cowper.

[1] Alluding, as I see reason to believe, to Townley's farce of *High Life Below Stairs*, in which the *ha-ha's* are indeed numerous enough. Goldsmith had already referred to this popular farce in No. 5 of *The Bee:* "A Word or Two on the Late Farce Called *High Life Below Stairs*."—See Vol. VI.

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present; and I generally fasten a criticism upon every selling book that is published.

"I once had an author who never left the least opening for the critics: close was the word, always very right, and very dull, ever on the safe side of an argument; yet, with all his qualifications, incapable of coming into favour. I soon perceived that his bent was for criticism; and, as he was good for nothing else, supplied him with pens and paper, and planted him at the beginning of every month as a censor on the works of others. In short, I found him a treasure; no merit could escape him: but, what is most remarkable of all, he ever wrote best and bitterest when drunk." "But are there not some works," interrupted I," that from the very manner of their composition must be exempt from criticism; particularly such as profess to disregard its laws?" "There is no work whatsoever but he can criticise," replied the bookseller; "even though you wrote in Chinese he would have a pluck at you. Suppose you should take it into your head to publish a book, let it be a volume of Chinese Letters, for instance; write how you will, he shall show the world you could have written better. Should you, with the most local exactness, stick to the manners and customs of the country from whence you come, should you confine yourself to the narrow limits of Eastern knowledge, and be perfectly simple, and perfectly natural, he has then the strongest reason to exclaim. He may with a sneer send you back to China for readers. He may observe that,

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after the first or second letter, the iteration of the same simplicity is insupportably tedious; but the worst of all is, the public in such a case will anticipate his censures, and leave you with all your instructive simplicity to be mauled at discretion."

"Yes," cried I, "but in order to avoid his indignation and, what I should fear more, that of the public, I would, in such a case, write with all the knowledge I was master of. As I am not possessed of much learning, at least I would not suppress what little I had; nor would I appear more stupid than nature made me." "Here then," cries the bookseller, "we should have you entirely in our power; unnatural, un-Eastern, quite out of character, erroneously sensible, would be the whole cry. Sir, we should then hunt you down like a rat."[1] "Head of my father!" said I, "sure there are but two ways—the door must either be shut, or it must be open. I must either be natural or unnatural." "Be what you will, we shall criticise you," returned the bookseller, "and prove you a dunce in spite of your teeth. But, Sir, it is time that I should come to business. I have just now in the press a history of China; and if you will but put your name to it as the author, I shall repay the obligation with gratitude." "What, Sir," replied I, "put my name

[1] Introduced as an indirect mode of reply to occasional objectors in the newspapers, that the character of a Chinese was not sufficiently preserved—that the letter-writer was too observant, or too well-informed upon English matters, for the country to which he assumed to belong.

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to a work which I have not written! Never, while I retain a proper respect for the public and myself." The bluntness of my reply quite abated the ardour of the bookseller's conversation; and, after about half an hour's disagreeable reserve, he, with some ceremony, took his leave and withdrew. Adieu.[1]

[1] This admirable letter is built on Pope's still more admirable description of his ride to Oxford in company with Lintot the bookseller. Lintot, in an unpublished letter to Broome the poet, now before me, calls it a *merry* letter.

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LETTER LII

THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF DISTINGUISHING MEN IN ENGLAND BY THEIR DRESS—TWO INSTANCES OF THIS

To the Same

IN all other countries, my dear Fum Hoam, the rich are distinguished by their dress. In Persia, China, and most parts of Europe, those who are possessed of much gold or silver put some of it upon their clothes; but in England those who carry much upon their clothes are remarked for having but little in their pockets. A tawdry outside is regarded as a badge of poverty; and those who can sit at home, and gloat over their thousands in silent satisfaction, are generally found to do it in plain clothes.

This diversity of thinking from the rest of the world which prevails here, I was first at a loss to account for; but am since informed that it was introduced by intercourse between them and their neighbours the French; who, whenever they came in order to pay those islanders a visit, were

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generally very well dressed, and very poor, daubed with lace, but all the gilding on the outside. By this means laced clothes have been brought so much into contempt that at present even their mandarins are ashamed of finery.

I must own myself a convert to English simplicity. I am no more for ostentation of wealth than of learning: the person who in company should pretend to be wiser than others, I am apt to regard as illiterate and ill-bred; the person whose clothes are extremely fine, I am too apt to consider as not being possessed of any superiority of fortune, but resembling those Indians who are found to wear all the gold they have in the world in a bob at the nose.

I was lately introduced into a company of the best-dressed men I have seen since my arrival. Upon entering the room, I was struck with awe at the grandeur of the different dresses. That personage, thought I, in blue and gold must be some emperor's son; that in green and silver a prince of the blood; he in embroidered scarlet a prime minister: all first-rate noblemen, I suppose, and well-looking noblemen, too. I sat for some time with that uneasiness which conscious inferiority produces in the ingenuous mind, all attention to their discourse. However, I found their conversation more vulgar than I could have expected from personages of such distinction: if these, thought I to myself, be princes, they are the most stupid princes I have ever conversed with; yet still I

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continued to venerate their dress, for dress has a kind of mechanical influence on the mind.

My friend in black, indeed, did not behave with the same deference, but contradicted the finest of them all in the most peremptory tones of contempt. But I had scarcely time to wonder at the imprudence of his conduct when I found occasion to be equally surprised at the absurdity of theirs; for upon the entry of a middle-aged man, dressed in a cap, dirty shirt, and boots, the whole circle seemed diminished of their former importance, and contended who should be first to pay their obeisance to the stranger. They somewhat resembled a circle of Kalmucs offering incense to a bear.

Eager to know the cause of so much seeming contradiction, I whispered my friend out of the room, and found that the august company consisted of no other than a dancing-master, two fiddlers, and a third-rate actor, all assembled in order to make a set at country dances; as the middle-aged gentleman whom I saw enter was a squire from the country, and desirous of learning the new manner of footing, and smoothing up the rudiments of his rural minuet.

I was no longer surprised at the authority which my friend assumed among them; nay, was even displeased (pardon my Eastern education) that he had not kicked every creature of them downstairs. "What," said I, "shall a set of such paltry fellows dress themselves up like sons of kings, and claim even the transitory respect of half-an-hour!

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There should be some law to restrain so manifest a breach of privilege; they should go from house to house, as in China, with the instruments of their profession strung round their necks; by this means we might be able to distinguish and treat them in a style of becoming contempt." "Hold, my friend," replied my companion, " were your reformation to take place, as dancing-masters and fiddlers now mimic gentlemen in appearance, we should then find our fine gentlemen conforming to theirs. A beau might be introduced to a lady of fashion with a fiddle-case hanging at his neck by a red ribbon, and, instead of a cane, might carry a fiddle-stick. Though to be as dull as a first-rate dancing-master might be used with proverbial justice, yet, dull as he is, many a fine gentleman sets him up as the proper standard of politeness; copies not only the pert vivacity of his air, but the flat insipidity of his conversation. In short, if you make a law against dancing-masters imitating the fine gentleman, you should with as much reason enact that no fine gentleman shall imitate the dancing-master."

After I had left my friend, I made towards home, reflecting, as I went, upon the difficulty of distinguishing men by their appearance. Invited, however, by the freshness of the evening, I did not return directly, but went to ruminate on what had passed, in a public garden belonging to the city. Here, as I sat upon one of the benches, and felt the pleasing sympathy which nature in bloom inspires,

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a disconsolate figure, who sat on the other end of the seat, seemed no way to enjoy the serenity of the season. His dress was miserable beyond description: a thread-bare coat of the rudest materials; a shirt, though clean, yet extremely coarse; hair that seemed to have been long unconscious of the comb; and all the rest of his equipage impressed with the marks of genuine poverty.

As he continued to sigh, and testify every symptom of despair, I was naturally led, from a motive of humanity, to offer comfort and assistance. You know my heart, and that all who are miserable may claim a place there. The pensive stranger at first declined my conversation; but at last, perceiving a peculiarity in my accent and manner of thinking, he began to unfold himself by degrees.

I now found that he was not so very miserable as he at first appeared; upon my offering him a small piece of money he refused my favour, yet without appearing displeased at my intended generosity. It is true, he sometimes interrupted the conversation with a sigh, and talked pathetically of neglected merit; yet still I could perceive a benignity in his countenance, that, upon a closer inspection, bespoke inward content.

Upon a pause in the conversation I was going to take my leave, when he begged I would favour him with my company home to supper. I was surprised at such a demand from a person of his appearance; but, willing to indulge curiosity, I

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accepted his invitation, and, though I felt some repugnance at being seen with one who appeared so very wretched, went along with seeming alacrity.

Still, as he approached nearer home, his good humour proportionably seemed to increase. At last he stopped, not at the gate of an hovel, but of a magnificent palace! When I cast my eyes upon all the sumptuous elegance which everywhere presented upon entering, and then when I looked at my seemingly miserable conductor, I could scarcely think that all this finery belonged to him; yet in fact it did. Numerous servants ran through the apartments with silent assiduity; several ladies of beauty, and magnificently dressed, came to welcome his return; a most elegant supper was provided: in short, I found the person, whom a little before I had sincerely pitied, to be in reality a most refined epicure—one who courted contempt abroad, in order to feel with keener gust the pleasures of eminence at home. Adieu.

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LETTER LIII

THE ABSURD TASTE FOR OBSCENE AND PERT NOVELS, SUCH AS "TRISTRAM SHANDY," RIDICULED [1]

From the Same

HOW often have we admired the eloquence of Europe! that strength of thinking, that delicacy of imagination, even beyond the efforts of the Chinese themselves. How were we enraptured with those bold figures which sent every sentiment with force to the heart! How have we spent whole days together in learning those arts by which European writers got

[1] "Until 1759, Sterne had only printed two sermons; but in this year he surprised the world by publishing the first and second volumes of *Tristram Shandy*. He went to London to enjoy his fame, and met with all that attention which the public gives to men of notoriety. He boasts of being engaged fourteen dinners deep, and received this hospitality as a tribute; while his contemporaries saw the festivity in a very different light. 'Any man who has a name, or who has the power of pleasing,' said Johnson, 'will be very generally invited in London. The man Sterne, I am told, has had engagements for three months.' Johnson's feelings of morality, and respect for the priesthood, led him to speak of Sterne with contempt; but when Goldsmith added, 'And a very dull fellow,' he replied with his emphatic 'Why, no, Sir.'"—SIR WALTER SCOTT, *Prose Works*, vol. iii., p. 282.

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within the passions, and led the reader as if by enchantment!

But, though we have learned most of the rhetorical figures of the last age, yet there seems to be one or two of great use here which have not yet travelled to China. The figures I mean are called bawdy and pertness: none are more fashionable; none so sure of admirers; they are of such a nature that the merest blockhead, by a proper use of them, shall have the reputation of a wit; they lie level to the meanest capacities, and address those passions which all have, or would be ashamed to disown.

It has been observed, and I believe with some truth, that it is very difficult for a dunce to obtain the reputation of a wit; yet by the assistance of the figure bawdy this may be easily effected, and a bawdy blockhead often passes for a fellow of smart parts and pretensions. Every object in nature helps the jokes forward, without scarce any effort of the imagination. If a lady stands, something very good may be said upon that; if she happens to fall, with the help of a little fashionable pruriency there are forty sly things ready on the occasion. But a prurient jest has always been found to give most pleasure to a few very old gentlemen, who, being in some measure dead to other sensations, feel the force of the allusion with double violence on the organs of risibility.

An author who writes in this manner is generally sure, therefore, of having the very old and the impotent among his admirers; for these he may

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properly be said to write, and from these he ought to expect his reward; his works being often a very proper succedaneum to cantharides, or an asafœtida pill. His pen should be considered in the same light as the squirt of an apothecary, both being directed at the same generous end.

But, though this manner of writing be perfectly adapted to the taste of gentlemen and ladies of fashion here, yet still it deserves greater praise in being equally suited to the most vulgar apprehensions. The very ladies and gentlemen of Benin or Caffraria are in this respect tolerably polite, and might relish a prurient joke of this kind with critical propriety; probably too with higher gust, as they wear neither breeches nor petticoats to intercept the application.

It is certain I never could have expected the ladies here, biassed as they are by education, capable at once of bravely throwing off their prejudices, and not only applauding books in which this figure makes the only merit, but even adopting it in their own conversation. Yet so it is; the pretty innocents now carry those books openly in their hands, which formerly were hidden under the cushion; they now lisp their double meanings with so much grace, and talk over the raptures they bestow with such little reserve, that I am sometimes reminded of a custom among the entertainers in China, who think it a piece of necessary breeding to whet the appetites of their guests by letting them smell

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dinner in the kitchen, before it is served up to table.[1]

The veneration we have for many things entirely proceeds from their being carefully concealed. Were the idolatrous Tartar permitted to lift the veil which keeps his idol from view, it might be a certain method to cure his future superstition: with what a noble spirit of freedom, therefore, must that writer be possessed who bravely paints things as they are, who lifts the veil of modesty, who displays the most hidden recesses of the temple, and shows the erring people that the object of their vows is either, perhaps, a mouse or a monkey.

However, though this figure be at present so much in fashion; though the professors of it are so much caressed by the great, those perfect judges of literary excellence; yet it is confessed to be only a revival of what was once fashionable here before.

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[1] "The following anecdote we have from a sure source. Soon after *Tristram* had appeared, Sterne asked a Yorkshire lady of fortune and condition whether she had read his book. 'I have not, Mr. Sterne,' was the answer, 'and, to be plain with you, I am informed it is not proper for female perusal.' 'My dear good lady,' replied the author, 'do not be gulled by such stories; the book is like your young heir there' (pointing to a child of three years old, who was rolling on the carpet in his white tunics), 'he shows at times a good deal that is usually concealed, but it is all in perfect innocence! This witty excuse may be so far admitted; for it cannot be said that the licentious humour of *Tristram Shandy* is of the kind which applies itself to the passions, or is calculated to corrupt society. But it is a sin against taste, if allowed to be harmless as to morals. A handful of mud is neither a firebrand nor a stone; but to fling it about in sport argues coarseness of mind, and want of common manners."—Sir Walter Scott, *Prose Works*, vol. iii., p. 290.

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There was a time when, by this very manner of writing, the gentle Tom D'Urfey,[1] as I read in English authors, acquired his great reputation and became the favourite of a king.[2]

The works of this original genius, though they never travelled abroad to China, and scarce have reached posterity at home, were once found upon every fashionable toilet, and made the subject of polite—I mean very polite—conversation. "Has your Grace seen Mr. D'Urfey's last new thing, the *Oylet Hole?* A most facetious piece!" "Sure, my Lord, all the world must have seen it; D'Urfey is certainly the most comical creature alive. It is impossible to read his things and live. Was there ever anything so natural and pretty as when the Squire and Bridget meet in the cellar? And then the difficulties they both find in broaching the beer barrel are so arch and so ingenious! We have cer-

[1] Tom D'Urfey, as he was generally called, was descended from an ancient family in France. He wrote a number of ballads, songs, etc., which were published in six volumes 12mo, under the title of *Wit and Mirth, or Pills to Purge Melancholy;* besides more than thirty dramatic pieces, none of which are now on the muster roll of acting plays. He was buried in the churchyard of St. James's, Westminster; against the outer wall of the south-west angle of which church is a stone inscribed: "Tom D'Urfey, died Feb. 26, 1723."

[2] "I myself remember King Charles the Second leaning on Tom D'Urfey's shoulder more than once, and humming over a song with him."—*The Guardian*, No. 67. King William had him one night to sing to him, and Queen Anne gave him fifty guineas for singing a song to her, beginning,

"The crown is too weighty
For shoulders of eighty,"

written in ridicule of the Princess Sophia, electress-dowager of Hanover.

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tainly nothing of this kind in the language." [1] In this manner they spoke then, and in this manner they speak now; for, though the successor of D'Urfey does not excel him in wit, the world must confess he outdoes him in obscenity.

There are several very dull fellows, who, by a few mechanical helps, sometimes learn to become extremely brilliant and pleasing; with a little dexterity in the management of the eyebrows, fingers, and nose. By imitating a cat, a sow and pigs, by a loud laugh, and a slap on the shoulder, the most ignorant are furnished out for conversation. But the writer finds it impossible to throw his winks, his shrugs, or his attitudes upon paper; he may borrow some assistance, indeed, by printing his face at the title-page; but, without wit, to pass for a man of ingenuity, no other mechanical help but downright obscenity will suffice. By speaking to some peculiar sensations, we are always sure of exciting laughter, for the jest does not lie in the writer, but in the subject.

But bawdy is often helped on by another figure, called pertness; and few indeed are found to excel in one that are not possessed of the other. As in

[1] "I have not quoted one Latin author since I came down, but have learned without book a song of Mr. Thomas D'Urfey's, who is your only poet of tolerable reputation in this country. He makes all the merriment in our entertainments, and but for him there would be so miserable a dearth of catches that I fear they would put either the parson or me upon making some for 'em. Any man, of any quality, is heartily welcome to the best toping table of our gentry, who can roar out some rhapsodies of his works."—POPE *to Henry Cromwell*, April, 1710.

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common conversation the best way to make the audience laugh is by first laughing yourself, so in writing, the properest manner is to show an attempt at humour, which will pass upon most for humour in reality. To effect this, readers must be treated with the most perfect familiarity: in one page the author is to make them a low bow, and in the next to pull them by the nose; he must talk in riddles, and then send them to bed in order to dream for the solution. He must speak of himself, and his chapters, and his manner, and what he would be at, and his own importance, and his mother's importance, with the utmost unpitying prolixity; now and then testifying his contempt for all but himself, smiling without jest, and without wit professing vivacity. Adieu.

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LETTER LIV

THE CHARACTER OF AN IMPORTANT TRIFLER[1]

From the Same

THOUGH naturally pensive, yet I am fond of gay company, and take every opportunity of thus dismissing the mind from duty. From this motive, I am often found in the centre of a crowd; and wherever pleasure is to be sold am always a purchaser. In those places, without being remarked by any, I join in whatever goes forward, work my passions into a similitude of frivolous earnestness, shout as they shout, and condemn as they happen to disapprove. A mind thus sunk for awhile below its natural standard is qualified for stronger flights, as those first retire who would spring forward with greater vigour.

Attracted by the serenity of the evening, my friend and I lately went to gaze upon the company in one of the public walks near the city. Here we sauntered together for some time, either praising the beauty of such as were handsome, or the dresses

[1] Reprinted by Goldsmith, in 1765, as Essay X.

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of such as had nothing else to recommend them. We had gone thus deliberately forward for some time, when, stopping on a sudden, my friend caught me by the elbow, and led me out of the public walk. I could perceive by the quickness of his pace, and by his frequently looking behind, that he was attempting to avoid somebody who followed: we now turned to the right, then to the left; as we went forward he still went faster, but in vain; the person whom he attempted to escape hunted us through every doubling, and gained upon us each moment; so that at last we fairly stood still, resolving to face what we could not avoid.

Our pursuer soon came up, and joined us with all the familiarity of an old acquaintance. "My dear Drybone,"[1] cries he, shaking my friend's hand, "where have you been hiding this half-a-century? Positively I had fancied you were gone down to cultivate matrimony and your estate in the country." During the reply I had an opportunity of surveying the appearance of our new companion: his hat was pinched up with peculiar smartness; his looks were pale, thin, and sharp; round his neck he wore a broad black ribbon, and in his bosom a buckle studded with glass; his coat was trimmed with tarnished twist; he wore by his side a sword with a black hilt, and his stockings of silk, though newly washed, were grown yellow by long service. I was so much engaged with the peculi-

[1] "My dear Charles," when reprinted, in 1765, as Essay X.

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Beau Tibbs.

Letter XXV. Citizen of the World

From the drawing by Frederick Simpson Coburn.

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arity of his dress that I attended only to the latter part of my friend's reply, in which he complimented Mr. Tibbs on the taste of his clothes, and the bloom in his countenance. "Psha, psha, Will,"[1] cried the figure, "no more of that if you love me: you know I hate flattery, on my soul I do; and yet, to be sure, an intimacy with the great will improve one's appearance, and a course of venison will fatten; and yet, faith, I despise the great as much as you do; but there are a great many damn'd honest fellows among them, and we must not quarrel with one half because the other wants breeding. If they were all such as my Lord Mudler, one of the most good-natured creatures that ever squeezed a lemon, I should myself be among the number of their admirers. I was yesterday to dine at the Duchess of Piccadilly's. My Lord was there. 'Ned,' says he to me, 'Ned,' says he, 'I 'll hold gold to silver I can tell where you were poaching last night.' 'Poaching, my Lord,' says I; 'faith you have missed already, for I staid at home, and let the girls poach for me. That 's my way; I take a fine woman as some animals do their prey—stand still, and swoop, they fall into my mouth.'"

"Ah, Tibbs, thou art an happy fellow," cried my companion, with looks of infinite pity; "I hope your fortune is as much improved as your understanding in such company?" "Improved," replied the other; "you shall know—but let it go no further

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[1] "Charles," when reprinted, in 1765, as Essay X.

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—a great secret—five hundred a year to begin with. My Lord's word of honour for it—his Lordship took me down in his own chariot yesterday, and we had a *tête-à-tête* dinner in the country; where we talked of nothing else." "I fancy you forget, Sir," cried I, "you told us but this moment of your dining yesterday in town." "Did I say so?" replied he, coolly; "to be sure, if I said so, it was so—dined in town: egad, now I do remember, I did dine in town; but I dined in the country too; for you must know, my boys, I eat two dinners. By the bye, I am grown as nice as the devil in my eating. I 'll tell you a pleasant affair about that: we were a select party of us to dine at Lady Grogram's, an affected piece, but let it go no farther; a secret. Well, there happened to be no asafœtida in the sauce to a turkey, upon which[1] says I, 'I 'll hold a thousand guineas, and say done first, that'—but dear Drybone, you are an honest creature, lend me half-a-crown for a minute or two, or so, just till—but harkee, ask me for it the next time we meet, or it may be twenty to one but I forget to pay you."

When he left us, our conversation naturally turned upon so extraordinary a character. His very dress, cries my friend, is not less extraordinary than his conduct. If you meet him this day you find him in rags; if the next, in embroidery. With those persons of distinction, of whom he talks so

[1] The words *there happened to be no asafœtida in the sauce to a turkey, upon which*, were omitted when the paper was reprinted in 1765, as Essay X.

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familiarly, he has scarce a coffee-house acquaintance. However, both for the interests of society, and perhaps for his own, Heaven has made him poor, and while all the world perceive his wants, he fancies them concealed from every eye. An agreeable companion, because he understands flattery; and all must be pleased with the first part of his conversation, though all are sure of its ending with a demand on their purse. While his youth countenances the levity of his conduct he may thus earn a precarious subsistence, but when age comes on, the gravity of which is incompatible with buffoonery, then will he find himself forsaken by all; condemned in the decline of life to hang upon some rich family whom he once despised, there to undergo all the ingenuity of studied contempt, to be employed only as a spy upon the servants, or a bugbear to fright the children into obedience.[1] Adieu.

[1] *Duty*, Essay X., 1765.

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LETTER LV

HIS CHARACTER CONTINUED; WITH THAT OF HIS WIFE, HIS HOUSE, AND FURNITURE [1]

To the Same

I AM apt to fancy I have contracted a new acquaintance whom it will be [2] no easy matter to shake off. My little beau yesterday overtook me again in one of the public walks, and slapping me on the shoulder saluted me with an air of the most perfect familiarity. His dress was the same as usual, except that he had more powder in his hair, wore a dirtier shirt, a pair of temple spectacles, and his hat under his arm.

As I knew him to be an harmless, amusing little thing, I could not return his smiles with any degree of severity; so we walked forward on terms of the utmost intimacy, and in a few minutes discussed all the usual topics preliminary to particular conversation.

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[1] Reprinted by its author in 1765, as Essay XI.

[2] Altered in 1765 to *There are some acquaintances whom it is*, when reprinted as Essay XI.

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The oddities that marked his character, however, soon began to appear; he bowed to several well-dressed persons, who, by their manner of returning the compliment, appeared perfect strangers. At intervals he drew out a pocket-book, seeming to take memorandums before all the company, with much importance and assiduity. In this manner he led me through the length of the whole walk, fretting at his absurdities, and fancying myself laughed at not less than him [1] by every spectator.

When we were got to the end of our procession, "Blast me," cries he with an air of vivacity, "I never saw the park so thin in my life before! there 's no company at all to-day; not a single face to be seen." "No company!" interrupted I peevishly; "no company where there is such a crowd? why man, there 's too much. What are the thousand that have been laughing at us but company?" "Lord, my dear," returned he, with the utmost good humour, "you seem immensely chagrined; but blast me, when the world laughs at me I laugh at the world, and so we are even. My Lord Trip, Bill Squash the Creolian, and I, sometimes make a party at being ridiculous; and so we say and do a thousand things for the joke's sake. But I see you are grave, and if you are for a fine grave sentimental companion, you shall dine with me and my wife to-day; I must insist on 't: I 'll introduce

[1] Altered in 1765 to *as well as he*, Essay XI.

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you to Mrs. Tibbs, a lady of as elegant qualifications as any in nature; she was bred—but that 's between ourselves—under the inspection of the Countess of All-night.[1] A charming body of voice; but no more of that, she shall give us a song. You shall see my little girl too, Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Tibbs, a sweet pretty creature! I design her for my Lord Drumstick's eldest son; but that 's in friendship, let it go no farther; she 's but six years old, and yet she walks a minuet, and plays the guitar immensely already. I intend she shall be as perfect as possible in every accomplishment. In the first place, I 'll make her a scholar; I 'll teach her Greek myself, and learn that language purposely to instruct her; but let that be a secret."

Thus saying, without waiting for a reply, he took me by the arm, and hauled me along. We passed through many dark alleys and winding ways; for, from some motives to me unknown, he seemed to have a particular aversion to every frequented street; at last, however, we got to the door of a dismal-looking house in the outlets of the town, where he informed me he chose to reside for the benefit of the air.

We entered the lower door, which ever seemed to lie most hospitably open; and I began to ascend an old and creaking staircase, when, as he mounted to show me the way, he demanded whether I delighted in prospects; to which, answering in the

[1] *Shoreditch*, Essay XI.

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affirmative, "Then," says he, "I shall show you one of the most charming in the world, out of my windows; we shall see the ships sailing, and the whole country for twenty miles round, tip-top, quite high. My Lord Swamp would give ten thousand guineas for such an one; but, as I sometimes pleasantly tell him, I always love to keep my prospects at home, that my frends may come to see me the oftener."

By this time we were arrived as high as the stairs would permit us to ascend, till we came to what he was facetiously pleased to call the first floor down the chimney; and knocking at the door, a voice from within demanded, "Who 's there?" My conductor answered that it was him. But this not satisfying the querist, the voice again repeated the demand: to which he answered louder than before; and now the door was opened by an old woman[1] with cautious reluctance.

When we were got in, he welcomed me to his house with great ceremony, and turning to the old woman asked where was her lady. "Good troth," replied she in a peculiar dialect, "she 's washing your twa shirts at the next door, because they have taken an oath against lending out the tub any longer." "My two shirts," cries he in a tone that faltered with confusion, "what does the idiot mean?" "I ken what I mean weel enough," replied the other; "she 's washing your twa shirts

[1] *Maidservant*, Essay XI.

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at the next door, because—" "Fire and fury! no more of thy stupid explanations," cried he; "go and inform her we have got company. Were that Scotch hag to be for ever in my family, she would never learn politeness, nor forget that absurd poisonous accent of hers, or testify the smallest specimen of breeding or high life; and yet it is very surprising too, as I had her from a Parliament man, a friend of mine from the highlands, one of the politest men in the world; but that 's a secret."

We waited some time for Mrs. Tibbs's arrival, during which interval I had a full opportunity of surveying the chamber and all its furniture; which consisted of four chairs with old wrought bottoms, that he assured me were his wife's embroidery; a square table that had been once japanned; a cradle in one corner, a lumbering cabinet in the other; a broken shepherdess, and a mandarin without an head, were stuck over the chimney; and round the walls several paltry unframed pictures, which, he observed, were all his own drawing. "What do you think, Sir, of that head in the corner, done in the manner of Grisoni? there 's the true keeping in it; it 's my own face, and, though there happens to be no likeness, a countess offered me an hundred for its fellow: I refused her, for, hang it, that would be mechanical, you know."

The wife at last made her appearance, at once a slattern and a coquette; much emaciated, but still carrying the remains of beauty. She made twenty apologies for being seen in such an odious disha-

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bille, but hoped to be excused, as she had staid out all night at the Gardens[1] with the countess, who was excessively fond of the horns. "And indeed, my dear," added she, turning to her husband, "his Lordship drank your health in a bumper." "Poor Jack," cries he, "a dear good-natured creature, I know he loves me: but I hope, my dear, you have given orders for dinner; you need make no great preparations neither, there are but three of us; something elegant, and little will do; a turbot, an ortolan, or a—" "Or what do your think, my dear," interrupts the wife, "of a nice pretty bit of ox-cheek, piping hot, and dressed with a little of my own sauce?" "The very thing," replies he; "it will eat best with some smart bottled beer; but be sure to let 's have the sauce his Grace was so fond of. I hate your immense loads of meat; that is country all over; extreme disgusting to those who are in the least acquainted with high life."

By this time my curiosity began to abate, and my appetite to increase: the company of fools may at first make us smile, but at last never fails of rendering us melancholy; I therefore pretended to recollect a prior engagement, and, after having shown my respect to the house, according to the fashion of the English, by giving the old servant a piece of money at the door, I took my leave; Mr. Tibbs assuring me that dinner, if I staid, would be ready at least in less than two hours.

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[1] *Vauxhall Gardens*, Essay XI.

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LETTER LVI

THE PRESENT SITUATION OF THE SEVERAL STATES OF EUROPE

From Fum Hoam to Altangi, the discontented Wanderer

THE distant sounds of music that catch new sweetness as they vibrate through the long-drawn valley are not more pleasing to the ear than the tidings of a far-distant friend. I have just received two hundred of thy letters by the Russian caravan, descriptive of the manners of Europe. You have left it to geographers to determine the site of their mountains, and extent of their lakes, seeming only employed in discovering the genius, the government, and disposition of the people.

In those letters I perceive a journal of the operations of your mind upon whatever occurs, rather than a detail of your travels from one building to another; of your taking a draught of this ruin, or that obelisk; of paying so many tomans for this commodity, or laying up a proper store for the passage of some new wilderness.

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From your accounts of Russia I learn that this nation is again relaxing into pristine barbarity; that its great emperor wanted a life of an hundred years more to bring about his vast design. A savage people may be resembled to their own forests; a few years are sufficient to clear away the obstructions to agriculture, but it requires many ere the ground acquires a proper degree of fertility: the Russians, attached to their ancient prejudices, again renew their hatred to strangers, and indulge every former brutal excess. So true it is that the revolutions of wisdom are slow and difficult, the revolutions of folly or ambition precipitate and easy. "We are not to be astonished," says Confucius, "that the wise walk more slowly in their road to virtue than fools in their passage to vice; since passion drags us along, while wisdom only points out the way." [1]

The German empire, that remnant of the majesty of ancient Rome, appears from your accounts on the eve of dissolution. The members of its vast body want every tie of government to unite them, and seem feebly held together only by their respect for ancient institutions. The very name of country and countrymen, which in other nations makes one of the strongest bonds of government, has been here for some time laid aside; each of its inhabitants seeming more proud of being called from the

[1] Though this fine maxim be not found in the Latin edition of the morals of Confucius, yet we find it ascribed to him by Le Comte, *Etat présent de la Chine*, vol. i., p. 348.—GOLDSMITH.

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petty state which gives him birth than by the more well-known title of German.

This government may be regarded in the light of a severe master and a feeble opponent. The states which are now subject to the laws of the empire are only watching a proper occasion to fling off the yoke, and those which are become too powerful to be compelled to obedience now begin to think of dictating in their turn. The struggles in this state are, therefore, not in order to preserve but to destroy the ancient constitution: if one side succeeds, the government must become despotic, if the other, several states will subsist without even nominal subordination; but, in either case, the Germanic constitution will be no more.

Sweden, on the contrary, though now seemingly a strenuous assertor of its liberties, is probably only hastening on to despotism. Their senators, while they pretend to vindicate the freedom of the people, are only establishing their own independence. The deluded people will, however, at last perceive the miseries of an aristocratical government; they will perceive that the administration of a society of men is ever more faithful than that of one only. They will fly from this most oppressive of all forms, where one single member is capable of controlling the whole, to take refuge under the throne, which will ever be attentive to their complaints. No people long endure an aristocratical government when they can apply elsewhere for redress. The lower orders of people may be

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enslaved for a time by a number of tyrants, but upon the first opportunity they will ever take a refuge in despotism or democracy.

As the Swedes are making concealed approaches to despotism, the French, on the other hand, are imperceptibly vindicating themselves into freedom. When I consider that those parliaments (the members of which are all created by the court, the presidents of which can act only by immediate direction) presume even to mention privileges and freedom, who till of late received directions from the throne with implicit humility—when this is considered I cannot help fancying that the genius of freedom has entered that kingdom in disguise. If they have but three weak monarchs more successively on the throne, the mask will be laid aside, and the country will certainly once more be free.

When I compare the figure which the Dutch make in Europe with that they assume in Asia, I am struck with surprise. In Asia, I find them the great lords of all the Indian seas; in Europe, the timid inhabitants of a paltry state—no longer the sons of freedom, but of avarice; no longer assertors of their rights by courage, but by negotiations; fawning on those who insult them, and crouching under the rod of every neighbouring power. Without a friend to save them in distress, and without virtue to save themselves; their government is poor, and their private wealth will serve but to invite some neighbouring invader.

I long with impatience for your letters from

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England, Denmark, Holland, and Italy; yet why wish for relations which only describe new calamities, which show that ambition and avarice are equally terrible in every region! Adieu.

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LETTER LVII

THE DIFFICULTY OF RISING IN LITERARY REPUTATION WITHOUT INTRIGUE OR RICHES

From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first president of the Ceremonial Academy at Pekin in China

I HAVE frequently admired the manner of criticising in China, where the learned are assembled in a body to judge of every new publication; to examine the merits of the work without knowing the circumstances of the author; and then to usher it into the world with the proper marks of respect or reprobation.

In England there are no such tribunals erected; but if a man thinks proper to be a judge of genius, few will be at the pains to contradict his pretensions. If any choose to be critics, it is but saying they are critics; and from that time forward they become invested with full power and authority over every caitiff who aims at their instruction or entertainment.

As almost every member of society has by this means a vote in literary transactions, it is no way

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surprising to find the rich leading the way here, as in other common concerns of life, to see them either bribing the numerous herd of voters by their interest, or browbeating them by their authority.

A great man says, at his table, that such a book is "no bad thing." Immediately the praise is carried off by five flatterers to be dispersed at twelve different coffee-houses,[1] from whence it circulates, still improving as it proceeds, through forty-five houses where cheaper liquors are sold; from thence it is carried away by the honest tradesman to his own fireside, where the applause is eagerly caught up by his wife and children, who have been long taught to regard his judgment as the standard of perfection. Thus, when we have traced a wide-extended literary reputation up to its original source, we shall find it derived from some great man, who has, perhaps, received all his education and English from a tutor of Berne, or a dancing-master of Picardy.

The English are a people of good sense; and I am the more surprised to find them swayed in their opinions by men who often, from their very education, are incompetent judges. Men who, being always bred in affluence, see the world only on one

[1] The influence of coffee-houses on the sale of books has now entirely changed. When Goldsmith wrote, every new poem and pamphlet of even ordinary importance was to be seen at a coffee-house. I have many quarto poems in my own possession bearing the inscription "Dick's Coffee-House" in large written letters on their title-pages. The influence of what was said at Will's Coffee-House is almost proverbial.

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side, are surely improper judges of human nature: they may indeed describe a ceremony, a pageant, or a ball; but how can they pretend to dive into the secrets of the human heart who have been nursed up only in forms, and daily behold nothing but the same insipid adulation smiling upon every face? Few of them have been bred in that best of schools, the school of adversity; and by what I can learn, fewer still have been bred in any school at all.

From such a description, one would think that a droning duke, or a dowager duchess, was not possessed of more just pretensions to taste than persons of less quality; and yet whatever the one or the other may write or praise shall pass for perfection, without farther examination. A nobleman has but to take a pen, ink, and paper, and write away through three large volumes, and then sign his name to the title-page; though the whole might have been before more disgusting than his own rent-roll, yet signing his name and title gives value to the deed; title being alone equivalent to taste, imagination, and genius.[1]

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[1] "Let but his Lordship write some dull lampoon,
He 's *Horaced* up in doggrel like his own;
But if to tragedy his Lordship yields—
False fame cries Athens—honest truth—Moorfields."
GARTH.

"What woful stuff this madrigal would be
In some starved hackney sonneteer, or me;
But let a Lord once own the happy lines,
How the wit brightens! how the style refines!
Before his sacred name flies every fault,
And each exalted stanza teems with thought."
POPE.

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As soon as a piece therefore is published, the first questions are "Who is the author? Does he keep a coach? Where lies his estate? What sort of a table does he keep?" If he happens to be poor and unqualified for such a scrutiny, he and his works sink into irremediable obscurity; and too late he finds that having fed upon turtle is a more ready way to fame than having digested Tully.

The poor devil against whom fashion has set its face vainly alleges that he has been bred in every part of Europe where knowledge was to be sold; that he has grown pale in the study of nature and himself; his works may please upon the perusal, but his pretensions to fame are entirely disregarded: he is treated like a fiddler, whose music, though liked, is not much praised, because he lives by it; while a gentleman performer, though the most wretched scraper alive, throws the audience into raptures. The fiddler indeed may in such a case console himself by thinking that, while the other goes off with all the praise, he runs away with all the money: but here the parallel drops; for, while the nobleman triumphs in unmerited applause, the author by profession steals off with—nothing.

The poor, therefore, here, who draw their pens auxiliary to the laws of their country, must think themselves very happy if they find not fame, but forgiveness: and yet they are hardly treated; for as every country grows more polite the press becomes more useful; and writers become more necessary as readers are supposed to increase. In a

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polished society, that man, though in rags, who has the power of enforcing virtue from the press is of more real use than forty stupid brachmans, or bonzes, or guebres, though they preached never so often, never so loud, or never so long. That man, though in rags, who is capable of deceiving even indolence into wisdom, and who professes amusement while he aims at reformation, is more useful in refined society than twenty cardinals, with all their scarlet, and tricked out in all the fopperies of scholastic finery.

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LETTER LVIII

A VISITATION DINNER DESCRIBED

To the Same

AS the Man in Black takes every opportunity of introducing me to such company as may serve to indulge my speculative temper, or gratify my curiosity, I was by his influence lately invited to a *visitation* dinner. To understand this term, you must know that it was formerly the custom here for the principal priests to go about the country once a year, and examine upon the spot whether those of subordinate orders did their duty, or were qualified for the task; whether their temples were kept in proper repair, or the laity pleased with their administration.

Though a visitation of this nature was very useful, yet it was found to be extremely troublesome, and for many reasons utterly inconvenient, for as the principal priests were obliged to attend at court, in order to solicit preferment, it was impossible they could at the same time attend in the country, which was quite out of the road of pro-

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motion; if we add to this the gout, which has been, time immemorial, a clerical disorder here, together with the bad wine and ill-dressed provisions that must infallibly be served up by the way, it was not strange that the custom has been long discontinued. At present, therefore, every head of the church, instead of going about to visit his priests, is satisfied if his priests come in a body once a year to visit him; by this means the duty of half a year is despatched in a day. When assembled, he asks each in his turn how they have behaved, and are liked; upon which those who have neglected their duty, or are disagreeable to their congregation, no doubt accuse themselves, and tell him all their faults; for which he reprimands them most severely.

The thoughts of being introduced into a company of philosophers and learned men (for as such I conceived them) gave me no small pleasure. I expected our entertainment would resemble those sentimental banquets so finely described by Xenophon and Plato: I was hoping some Socrates would be brought in from the door, in order to harangue upon divine love; but as for eating and drinking, I had prepared myself to be disappointed in that particular. I was apprised that fasting and temperance were tenets strongly recommended to the professors of Christianity, and I had seen the frugality and mortification of the priests of the East, so that I expected an entertainment where we should have much reasoning, and little meat.

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Upon being introduced, I confess I found no great signs of mortification in the faces or persons of the company. However, I imputed their florid look to temperance, and their corpulency to a sedentary way of living. I saw several preparations indeed for dinner, but none for philosophy. The company seemed to gaze upon the table with silent expectation, but this I easily excused. Men of wisdom, thought I, are ever slow of speech; they deliver nothing unadvisedly. "Silence," says Confucius, "is a friend that will never betray." They are now probably inventing maxims or hard sayings for their mutual instruction, when some one shall think proper to begin.

My curiosity was now wrought up to the highest pitch; I impatiently looked round, to see if any were going to interrupt the mighty pause; when at last one of the company declared that there was a sow in his neighbourhood that farrowed fifteen pigs at a litter. This I thought a very preposterous beginning; but just as another was going to second the remark, dinner was served, which interrupted the conversation for that time.

The appearance of dinner, which consisted of a variety of dishes, seemed to diffuse new cheerfulness upon every face; so that I now expected the philosophical conversation to begin, as they improved in good-humour. The principal priest, however, opened his mouth with only observing that the venison had not been kept enough, though he had given strict orders for having it killed ten

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days before. "I fear," continued he, "it will be found to want the true healthy flavour; you will find nothing of the original wildness in it." A priest, who sat next him, having smelt it and wiped his nose, "Ah, my good Lord," cries he, "you are too modest, it is perfectly fine; everybody knows that nobody understands keeping venison with your Lordship." "Ay, and partridges too," interrupted another; "I never find them right anywhere else." His Lordship was going to reply when a third took off the attention of the company by recommending the pig as inimitable. "I fancy, my Lord," continues he, "it has been smothered in its own blood." "If it has been smothered in its own blood," cried a facetious member, helping himself, "we 'll now smother it in egg-sauce." This poignant piece of humour produced a long, loud laugh, which the facetious brother observing, and, now that he was in luck, willing to second his blow, assured the company he would tell them a good story about that: "As good a story," cries he bursting into a violent fit of laughter himself, "as ever you heard in your lives. There was a farmer in my parish who used to sup upon wild ducks and flummery: so this farmer"—"Doctor Marrowfat," cries his Lordship, interrupting him, "give me leave to drink your health"—"so being fond of wild ducks and flummery"—"Doctor," adds a gentleman who sat next him, "let me advise you to a wing of this turkey"—"so this farmer being fond"—"Hob nob, Doctor, which do you choose white

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or red?"—"so being fond of wild ducks and flummery"—"Take care of your band, Sir, it may dip in the gravy." The doctor, now looking round, found not a single *eye* disposed to listen; wherefore, calling for a glass of wine, he gulped down the disappointment and the tale in a bumper.[1]

The conversation now began to be little more than a rhapsody of exclamations: as each had pretty well satisfied his own appetite, he now found sufficient time to press others. "Excellent! the very thing! Let me recommend the pig. Do but taste the bacon; never ate a better thing in my life.

[1] "I would refer the reader to George Selwyn's *Correspondence* if he would desire to study attentively one of the latest full-blown specimens of the breed of clergymen engendered by this system, and introduce himself to by no means one of the most objectionable of the smoking, reading, claret-drinking, toadying, gormandising, good-humoured parsons of the time when Goldsmith lived and wrote. He will find Doctor Warner quite an ornament to the Establishment throughout that book and only cursing, flinging, stamping, or gnashing, when anything goes amiss with Selwyn. He will observe that the reverend doctor is ready to wager his best cassock against a dozen of claret any day; and that the holy man would quote you even texts with the most pious of his cloth, 'if our friend the Countess had not blasted them.' In short, at whatever page he opens the *Correspondence*, he will find parson Warner in the highest possible spirits, whether quizzing 'canting pot-bellied justices,' contemplating with equanimity 'a fine corpse at Surgeons' Hall,' or looking forward with hopeful vivacity to the time when he shall 'be a fine grey-headed old jollocks of sixty-five.' They who would hastily accuse Fielding of exaggeration, in his portraitures taken from the church, should first contemplate this. Goldsmith is less severe in his exposure, but it is efficient, too; and I confess I never read a letter of Doctor Warner's, or think of his guzzling, his telling the same story over and over again, and his indifference to any kind of treatment shown him or service exacted of him so long as his bumper of claret is well filled, without being forcibly reminded of Doctor Marrowfat."—FORSTER'S *Life of Goldsmith*, vol. i., p. 278.

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Exquisite! delicious!" This edifying discourse continued through three courses, which lasted as many hours, till every one of the company were unable to swallow or utter anything more.

It is very natural for men who are unabridged in one excess to break into some other. The clergy here, particularly those who are advanced in years, think, if they are abstemious with regard to women and wine, they may indulge their other appetites without censure. Thus some are found to rise in the morning only to a consultation with their cook about dinner, and when that has been swallowed make no other use of their faculties (if they have any) but to ruminate on the succeeding meal.

A debauch of wine is even more pardonable than this, since one glass insensibly leads on to another, and instead of sating whets the appetite. The progressive steps to it are cheerful and seducing; the grave are animated, the melancholy relieved, and there is even classic authority to countenance the excess. But in eating, after nature is once satisfied, every additional morsel brings stupidity and distempers with it; and, as one of their own poets expresses it,—

"The soul subsides, and wickedly inclines
To seem but mortal, e'en in sound Divines."[1]

[1] "How pale each worshipful and reverend guest
Rise from a clergy or a city feast!
What life in all that ample body, say?
What heav'nly particle inspires the clay?
The soul subsides, and wickedly inclines
To seem but mortal, e'en in sound divines."
POPE.

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Let me suppose, after such a meal as this I have been describing, while all the company are sitting in lethargic silence round the table, groaning under a load of soup, pig, pork, and bacon—let me suppose, I say, some hungry beggar, with looks of want, peeping through one of the windows, and thus addressing the assembly: "Prithee, pluck those napkins from your chins; after nature is satisfied, all that you eat extraordinary is my property, and I claim it as mine. It was given you in order to relieve me, and not to oppress yourselves. How can they comfort or instruct others who can scarce feel their own existence, except from the unsavoury returns of an ill-digested meal? But though neither you nor the cushions you sit upon will hear me, yet the world regards the excesses of its teachers with a prying eye, and notes their conduct with double severity." I know no other answer any one of the company could make to such an expostulation but this: "Friend, you talk of our losing a character, and being disliked by the world; well, and supposing all this to be true, what then? who cares for the world? We 'll preach for the world, and the world shall pay us for preaching, whether we like each other or not."

END OF PART I

END OF VOLUME IV

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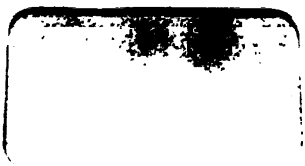

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